

## The Italian Reformation outside Italy

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# The Italian Reformation outside Italy

*Francesco Pucci's Heresy in Sixteenth-Century Europe*

*By*

Giorgio Caravale



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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

*To Stefania*

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	IX
<b>Abbreviations</b>	XI
<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>1 Becoming a Heretic in Sixteenth-Century Florence: Francesco Pucci and His Intellectual Education</b>	23
1 In the Labyrinth of Sources: Between History and Autobiography	23
2 Florence, the “Benefit of Christ” and the Academy	40
3 “A New Theology”	51
<b>2 Francesco Pucci in France during the First Wars of Religion</b>	63
1 Lyons	63
2 Paris and Its Environs. Among Florentine Exiles and Utopian Projects	71
3 An Anti-Roman Polemicist or a Masked “Papist”?	86
4 Between Heretics and Jesuits. Converting in Europe at the End of the Sixteenth-Century	92
5 Autobiography of an Encounter. John Dee and Edward Kelley	100
<b>3 At the Gates of Paris: Henry IV and the Roman Inquisition</b>	113
1 From Reconciliation to Flight	113
2 Pucci’s Millenarianism	115
3 Conciliarism and Latitudinarianism	123
4 “Earthly Affairs” and “Heavenly Matters”	132
<b>4 Among Catholics and Calvinists: Francesco Pucci in Late Sixteenth-Century France</b>	135
1 A Calvinist in <i>ligueur</i> Paris?	135
2 In the Wake of St Thomas	152
3 “Inhumanely Treated”. A Late Sixteenth-Century Dispute in Paris	155
4 At the Margins of the “de auxiliis” Controversy	161
<b>5 Jean Hotman and French Irenicism</b>	165
1 A Possible Meeting in Paris	165
2 The Reasons for an Exclusion	170
3 Irenicism or Tolerance?	182

**6 The Limits of the Kingdom of God 188**

- 1 *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* (1592) 188
- 2 Francesco Pucci and François du Jon: Conflicting Irenicism 191
- 3 The Lutheran Attack 201
- 4 The Pelagian Error. The Catholic Reply 205
- 5 Bruno, Campanella and the Limits of the Kingdom of God 209

**Epilogue 218**

**Conclusion: An Italian Heresy 225**

**Appendix 1 231**

**Appendix 2 236**

**Bibliography 239**

**Index 265**

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by Frank Gordon. John Tedeschi has generously revised my own translation of the footnotes. I wanna thank all of them for their time and collaboration. I'm also very grateful to Han Van Ruler, general editor of Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, and the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions. Thanks also to Chris Celenza, who first suggested the idea of this English version of the book, and thanks to Francesca Borgo who helped me finding an appropriate cover illustration. The translation of this book was partially sponsored by a grant from the SEPS (Segretariato Europeo per le Pubblicazioni Scientifiche).

I dedicate this book with all my love to Stefania, who has known of this research project since time immemorial.

# Abbreviations

AAS Salzburg, Archiepiscopal Archive  
ACDF Rome, Archivio della Congregazione per la dottrina della fede  
ARSI Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu  
ASF Florence, Archivio di Stato  
BAM Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana  
BAV Rome, Vatican Apostolic Library  
BMV Venice, Biblioteca Marciana  
BSHPF Paris, Bibliothèque de la Société d'histoire du protestantisme français  
SNS, AC Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, Archivio Cantimori  
DBI Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, Rome, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Treccani, 1960-  
ILI *Index des livres interdits*, 11 voll., ed. by J.M. De Bujanda, Sherbrooke-Genève, Centre d'Études de la Renaissance, Éditions de l'Université de Sherbrooke-Librarie Droz, 1984-2002  
*Beneficio di Cristo*: Benedetto da Mantova, *Il beneficio di Cristo. Con le versioni del secolo XVI, documenti e testimonianze*, ed. by S. Caponetto, Florence-Chicago, Sansoni-The Newberry Library, 1972  
Biagioni, "Universalismo": M. Biagioni, "Universalismo e tolleranza nel pensiero di Francesco Pucci," in *La formazione storica dell'alterità. Studi di storia della tolleranza nell'età moderna offerti a Antonio Rotondò*, promoted by Henry Méchoulan, Richard H. Popkin, Giuseppe Ricuperati and Luisa Simonutti, 3. vols., Florence, Olschki, 2001, tomo 1, secolo XVI, pp. 331-360  
Firpo, *Scritti*: L. Firpo, "Gli scritti di Francesco Pucci," in *Memorie dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, series 3°, tome 4, pars II, 1957, pp. 195-368  
*The Italian Reformation: The Italian Reformation of the Sixteenth Century and the Diffusion of Renaissance Culture: A Bibliography of the Secondary Literature (ca. 1750-1997)*, compiled by J. Tedeschi in association with J.M. Lattis, with an historiographical introduction by M. Firpo, Modena, Panini, 2000  
Pucci, *De praedestinatione*: F. Pucci, *De praedestinatione Dei*, ed. by M. Biagioni, Florence, Olschki, 2000  
Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*: F. Pucci, *L'efficacia salvifica del Cristo*, ed. by G. Isozio, prodrome by E. De Mas, Tirrenia, Edizioni del Cerro, 1991 (Italian translation of *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, Goudae, Typis Ioannis Zasseni Hoenii, 1592)

Pucci, *Informatione*: F. Pucci, *Informatione della Religione Christiana fondata sulla divina e humana ragione, secondo che la natura et la scrittura ci insegnano. Stampato in Fiorenza* [false place of printing] 1580 [but 1579]

Pucci, *Lettere*: F. Pucci, *Lettere, documenti e testimonianze*, ed. by Luigi Firpo and Renato Piattoli, 2 vols., Florence, Olschki, 1955–1957

Du Jon, *Admonition chrestienne*: F. Du Jon, *Admonition chrestienne, de F. Du Jon fidele serviteur de Dieu, aux chrestiens du Pays bas. Respondante aux fausses doctrines, blames, et calomnies de Iean Haren, contre les Eglises des Protestans, et le Ministres d'icelle, en un livre intitulé: Les causes iustes et equitables, qui ont meu Iean Haren, iadis Ministre, de quiter la religion pretendue reformee, pour se renger au giron de l'Eglise catholique*, s.l., 1586

Du Jon, *Catholicae doctrinae*: F. Du Jon, *Francisci Iunii catholicae doctrinae de natura hominis iacentis in peccato et gratia Dei ex peccato evocantis omneis communiter, et suos excitantis singulariter, Collatio cum doctrina nova libelli recens admodum editi, cuius inscriptio, De Christi servatoris efficacitate in omnibus et singulis hominibus, quatenus homines sunt, assertio catholica*, Lugduni Batavorum, ex officina Plantiniana, apud Franciscum Raphelengium, 1592

Du Jon, *Eirenicum*: F. Du Jon, *Eirenicum de pace Ecclesiae catholicae inter christianos, quamvis diversos sententiis, religiose procuranda, colenda atque continuenda: in psalmos Davidis cxxii et cxxxiii meditatio Francisci Junii*, Lugduni Batavorum, 1593, in octavo

Du Jon, *Le paisible chrestien*: F. Du Jon, *Le paisible chrestien, ou de la paix d'Eglises catholiques. Comment il faut garder saintement la paix, la nourrir et entretenir, mesmes en la diversité et difference d'opinions. Sur le pseaumes cxxii et cxxxiii. Meditation de François Dujon natif de Bourge*, Leidae, 1593

Osiander, *Refutatio*: L. Osiander, *Refutatio Scripti Satanici a Francisco Puccio Filidino in lucem editi et Goudae impressi, anno salutis 1592*, Tubingae 1593

Serarius, *Contra pelagiani*: N. Serarius, *Contra novos novi pelagiani et chiliastae, Francisci Pucci Filidini errores, quos sese in Anglia, Gallia, Hollandia, Helvetia et alibi multis probasse gloriatur; quosque per Germaniam peregrinando, colloquendo, suosque de Christi servatoris efficacitate libellos dissipando spargere incipit, libri duo*, Wirceburgi, 1593

# Introduction

1. When Francesco Pucci entered Paris in the autumn of 1591, it was still occupied by the fanatical Catholic *Ligueurs*. He had left Prague a few months previously and then, after a short stay in Frankfurt, he made his way to Paris with the secret intention of obtaining an audience with Henry IV somewhere near the city. He expected no less than the convocation of a universal council to restore peace throughout Christendom. In order to pave the way for this encounter, he circulated two *Theses* in university circles in Paris and among parisian theologians. These works addressed the universal and immediate efficacy of redemption and the imminent coming of Christ, inviting potential readers to take part in a public disputation on the matter. The challenge was accepted by both Catholics and Protestants, but Pucci was not satisfied with the final outcome of either.

We do not know for sure if Pucci actually succeeded in meeting Henry IV. We do know, however, that both his political appeal and the doctrinal challenge thrown down by his “theses” proved to be dramatic failures. At this point, aware of the growing hostility around him, he decided to entrust his reconciliation plan for Christianity to Pope Clement VIII. Like Giordano Bruno before him, Pucci saw the appointment of the Platonic philosopher Francesco Patrizi at the University of Rome and the creation of a political academy—whose aim was to reconcile the Christian world—under the control of Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini, the Pope’s nephew, as unequivocal signs of a clear change in direction by the Roman Curia. However, the open-minded attitude that characterised the early years of the papacy in question did not last. The growing power of the Holy Office and its authoritative leader, the uncompromising Cardinal Santoro, soon led the Pope to abandon his original intentions,<sup>1</sup> while Pucci paid dearly for his Utopian enthusiasm. On his way to Rome, he was arrested by papal agents in Salzburg and brought to the capital to be tried. After a long period of imprisonment with his friend and disciple Tommaso Campanella, he was condemned to death in 1597. It was only then that the irenic foreshadowing of the regeneration that was supposed to unite the fates of Christianity (and the Papacy) and France was revealed in all its tragic illusory nature.

2. This book seeks to answer the many unresolved questions that modern scholars are faced with regarding the singular sequence of events involving

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<sup>1</sup> On this topic, see G. Fragnito, *Proibito capire. Chiesa e volgare nell’Italia moderna* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 2005), *passim*.

this Florentine heretic. It will do this by examining the little we know about his education in Florence, his reading and the circles he moved in, focusing on his close relationship with France and sixteenth-century French culture. This bond, which is one of the least studied aspects of his life, is also extremely illuminating with regard to the political and religious repercussions and implications of his doctrinal proposal and personal intellectual development.

When he left France in 1572 to commence his search for 'divine truth', his doctrinal and theological knowledge was already extensive. The maturity of his thinking, even in his first public appearances in the arena of European theological debate in the second half of the sixteenth-century, is shown by his theses on faith, the Last Supper, original sin, and the Holy Spirit, which he presented to the Consistory of the French church in London on 22 January and 7 March, and by the letters sent to the theologian Johann Jakob Grynæus of Basle on 30 November 1578 or to the minister of the Italian church in Geneva, Niccolò Balbani, soon after.<sup>2</sup> His relations in the first half of the 1570s (prior to his first public disputations) with the lively Neoplatonic world at Oxford certainly helped him to define certain positions more clearly and sharpen his thinking,<sup>3</sup> but his core doctrines were already largely formed by the time he left France. Many scholars have focused on the original ideas put forward by this young Florentine merchant in the main European cities and the disputations in which he defended them before the leading religious authorities. However, because of the paucity of sources regarding the first decades of his life, there are still many unanswered questions about the origins of his doctrines—where and how he picked up such original ideas, and how he received his education. In an attempt to answer these questions, the first pages of this book take the reader back to Lyons in the 1560s and Florence in the late 1550s and early 1560s, with the aim of reconstructing the literature, relationships, social circles and historical figures that he met. In this way, we can outline the background, in some cases with more detailed accounts, of his early education and training. In many instances, the extraordinary richness of recent histori-

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<sup>2</sup> M. Biagioni, "Universalismo," 335.

<sup>3</sup> L. Firpo, "Francesco Pucci in Inghilterra," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 5 (1951), 158–173, now published also in Id., *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia* (Naples, Prismi, 1996), 53–65; and, above all, A. Rotondò, "Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra e i primi scritti teologici di Francesco Pucci," in Id., *Studi e ricerche di storia eretica* (Turin, Giappichelli, 1974), 225–271, as well as his "Nuove testimonianze sul soggiorno di Francesco Pucci a Basilea", in *Studi e ricerche*, I, Istituto di Storia, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Università degli Studi di Firenze (Florence, All'insegna del Giglio, 1981), 271–288, now both republished in Id., *Studi di storia eretica del Cinquecento*, 2 vols. (Florence, Olschki, 2008), 2, respectively 577–615 and 617–633.

ography about religion in sixteenth-century Italy has filled in the documentary gaps, while in other cases I have allowed myself to be guided by the brief auto-biographical references scattered among his works and letters. The result is a picture that may be partial and imperfect, but nonetheless provides us with more complete knowledge of Pucci (Chapter 1).

A study of Pucci's Florentine and Savonarolan roots will make it easier not only to understand the political implications of his close relationship with the anti-Medici exiles in France, but also to gauge the distance between his Utopian views and the political concreteness of some of his travelling companions (Chapter 11). The reconstruction of his disputations in the French capital and the evocation of the climate of growing hostility surrounding his political and religious proposal will enable us to focus on the reasons for his failure (Chapters III and IV). Accused of anti-predestinarianism by Protestants and branded a Pelagian by the defenders of Catholic orthodoxy, Pucci saw his proposal come to nothing in the same France that had seen the development of the strongest irenic trains of thought in sixteenth-century Europe and was opposed by their best-known exponents.

This book also seeks to provide an explanation for the reasons for this defeat by comparing the different traditions referred to by Pucci and the French irenicists; the name of Jean Hotman stands out above all (Chapter V). The book Pucci wrote at the time of the disputations to explain his convictions to a wider audience (*De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, 1592) was violently attacked within a year by a Jesuit, Nicolò Serario, a Calvinist, François Du Jon, and a Lutheran, Lukas Osiander (Chapter VI). The story of the Florentine exile—and with it the book—ends with this threefold rebuttal, almost a sad foreshadowing of the deadly fate awaiting him.

3. The idea of writing a book on Francesco Pucci originated more than ten years ago following the chance find of two long unpublished letters—one to Pope Gregory XIV and one to the latter's nephew, Cardinal Sfondrati—from Pucci among the papers of the Archive of the former Holy Office, which had only recently become accessible to researchers and where I was working on something totally different (see *infra*, Chapter III). I continued collecting documents and reflections regarding the central issues in these letters over the years and gradually, as other topics and projects began to overlap, my research expanded until the book reached its present final form. My work would certainly not have been possible without the background provided by the fundamental studies on sixteenth-century Italian and European religious history by twentieth-century historiographers. I am referring in particular to research by Delio Cantimori, Luigi Firpo and Antonio Rotondò. Cantimori produced the first full account of Pucci, presenting him as one the most significant figures

in his *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento* (Florence, 1939).<sup>4</sup> He analysed the content of Pucci's major published work, *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, some unpublished writings he had come across and partially published two years previously in a collection co-edited with Elizabeth Feist,<sup>5</sup> and an important anonymous publication (*Forma d'una repubblica catholica*) which he attributed to Pucci. Starting with an analysis of the Basle controversy with Fausto Sozzini about the question of Adam's immortality, Cantimori wrote an essay about Pucci's theology which is still an essential point of reference for all scholars. He saw Pucci's thinking and work as part of a wider pattern that cast light on the contribution made by Italian religious exiles to the development of European culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In his celebration of the cultural contribution made by Italians living abroad, Cantimori highlighted the strong link between Italian Humanism and the demands for religious and political tolerance that were a feature of radical Enlightenment thinking. This approach was in perfect keeping with the exaltation of Italianness encouraged by Fascist cultural policies.<sup>6</sup>

Luigi Firpo came upon Francesco Pucci by another route. A scholar of political thought between the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation, Firpo encountered Pucci in the course of his wide-ranging research on Tommaso Campanella, who met the Florentine heretic in prison in Rome in the mid-1590s. While awaiting his death sentence, Pucci found time to share many of his thoughts and beliefs, which Campanella later included in his writings: "Campanella is leading me towards an acquaintance of his, Francesco Pucci, the link that I was missing for the Postel-Campanella derivation of the beginning of Christian Universalism. I have fairly accurately reconstructed Pucci's final years (Campanella dedicated a sonnet to him, 'A uno che morse nel S. Uffizio' ['To one who died in the Holy Office'])," Firpo wrote in one of his first letters to Cantimori.<sup>7</sup> As he was always fascinated by the political implications

<sup>4</sup> (Florence, Sansoni, 1939). Quotations in the following pages are taken from the recent version of the book edited by Adriano Prosperi for the publisher Einaudi (Turin, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> *Per la storia degli eretici italiani del secolo XVI in Europa*, testi raccolti da D. Cantimori e E. Feist, Rome, Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1937, pp. 111–209.

<sup>6</sup> R. Pertici, "Mazzinianesimo, fascismo, comunismo: l'itinerario politico di Delio Cantimori (1919–1943)", *Storia della storiografia*, 31 (1997), pp. 1–128; M. Ciliberto, *Intellettuali e fascismo. Saggio su Delio Cantimori*, Bari, De Donato, 1977, and Id., "Cantimori e gli eretici, Filosofia, storiografia e politica tra gli anni venti e gli anni trenta", in *Storia e storiografia. Studi su Delio Cantimori*, ed. by B.V. Bandini (Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1979), 152–193.

<sup>7</sup> "Campanella mi sta portando sulle tracce di una sua conoscenza. Francesco Pucci, l'anello che mi mancava per la derivazione Postel-Campanella sull'avvio dell'universalismo cristiano. Ho ricostruito con qualche esattezza gli ultimi anni del Pucci (a lui Campanella dedica il

of sixteenth-century Utopia, Firpo was extremely interested in the anonymous text that Cantimori attributed to Pucci, namely *Forma d'una republica catholica* (1581), that “body of a healthy republic” in which “all men of good will” could live in harmony “without moving from the countries where they live.” This was a plan for an ideal secret society, organised in minute detail with all the necessary colleges, statutes, consuls, and officials, a totally original blend of Utopian elements and concrete organisational initiatives, which could certainly never have been achieved in the terms proposed by its creator, but which at the same time stood apart from other Utopias suggested in sixteenth-century Europe thanks to the extremely realistic nature of certain aspects. The text seemed to have re-emerged from the British archives specifically in order to grant a new lease of life to the link between Utopianism and political realism which Firpo was studying in those years, with particular reference to Ludovico Agostini and Campanella.<sup>8</sup> It was certainly no coincidence that one of Firpo's early projects was to provide solid “philological, historical, and linguistic” grounds to justify the work's still flimsy attribution by Cantimori:<sup>9</sup> “I am more and more of the conviction that the *Forma d'una republica catholica* is without any doubt his. What do you think of the matter?”, he wrote to Cantimori in 1947. “I can find no reasons for denying this attribution and, above all, I can see no other Italian emigrants in London around the year 1580 who were capable of producing a text which so thoroughly encapsulates Pucci's general ideas.”<sup>10</sup> Pucci also gave Firpo the opportunity to refine his sensitivity as a historian of religious ideas and life to such an extent that he was soon able to step forward as one of the leading figures in the “Corpus Reformatorum Italicorum” publications, together with Giorgio Spini, John Tedeschi, and Antonio Rotondò.<sup>11</sup>

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sonetto “A uno che morse nel S. Uffizio”); letter from Turin, September 6th, 1947, in sns, AC, fasc. Luigi Firpo, cc. nn. On the relationship between Pucci and Campanella, see the works published by G. Ernst quoted *infra*, ch. vi.

8 M. Isnardi Parente, “Il Botero di Luigi Firpo,” *Botero e la 'Ragion di Stato'*, Atti del convegno in memoria di Luigi Firpo, Torino 8–10 marzo 1990, ed. A.E. Baldini (Florence, Olschki, 1992), 473–484: 480.

9 Firpo, *Scritti*, pp. 5–26 (quoted from the offprint).

10 «Sto persuadendomi sempre più che sua sia senza dubbio la “Forma d'una republica catholica”. Lei che ne pensa? Ragioni per negare l'attribuzione non so trovarne e soprattutto non vedo altri emigrati italiani a Londra verso l'ottanta cui si possa attribuire un testo che tanto bene si inquadra nelle idee generali del Pucci»; letter from Turin.

11 A.E. Baldini, “Tre inediti di Francesco Pucci al cardinal nepote e a Gregorio XIV alla vigilia del suo 'rientro' a Roma”, *Rinascimento* 39 (1999), 157–223: 157. On the origins of that research project, whose first volume edited by Antonio Rotondò was published only in 1968 (C. Renato, *Opere*, Florence-Chicago, Sansoni-Newberry Library) and, in particular,

The research Firpo carried out in the 1950s and 1960s drastically renovated the profile that Cantimori had drawn of Pucci. The theological dimension which Cantimori's writings had largely been limited to was enriched by a surprisingly large collection of letters and documents (edited in collaboration with Renato Piattoli)<sup>12</sup> and a *catalogue raisonné* of his works.<sup>13</sup> Firpo used all of these to provide a more accurate description of the different European circles in which Pucci moved during his many years of wandering; he reconstructed human and intellectual relationships, cultural *milieux*, debates and controversies. He focused in particular on Pucci's first stay in England, his time in Basle, his second experience in England, his decisive meeting with John Dee in Krakow in the mid-1580s, his friendship with Christian Francken and his sojourns in Prague, up to his trial and execution in Rome in 1597.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, in his wide-ranging investigation into the Italian heretical diaspora in sixteenth-century Europe, Antonio Rotondò—one of Cantimori's last pupils in Florence and also, as already mentioned, one of the leading figures, together with Luigi Firpo, in the “Corpus Reformatorum Italicorum”<sup>15</sup>—made important contributions to our knowledge of Pucci's first stay in England and his experiences in Basle.<sup>16</sup> Rotondò felt that Cantimori's research lacked precise analysis of the European scope of many of Pucci's works. “Many of these texts were considered by Cantimori to be an expression of uniquely Italian ideas and requirements rather more than they actually were,” he wrote some years later,<sup>17</sup> also observing that “*De Christi servatoris efficacitate* is seen by Cantimori as being quite outside the context of European debate on the matter. Cantimori sought support for this form of primacy and the isolation of Pucci in three

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on the projects conceived in the 1960s by Luigi Firpo and Delio Cantimori, I shall address in a forthcoming article.

<sup>12</sup> Pucci, *Lettere*.

<sup>13</sup> Firpo, *Scritti*.

<sup>14</sup> Firpo's essays have been collected in a volume entitled *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia* (Naples, Prismi, 1996). On Pucci's arrest, see P. Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia nel Cinquecento. Nuovi documenti sul processo e la condanna di Francesco Pucci 1592–1597* (Padua, Cedam, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> See his autobiographical notes (“Contributo alla storia dei miei studi”) published as a foreword to his two volumes entitled *Studi di storia eretica del Cinquecento*, XIII–XXVII.

<sup>16</sup> The reference is to the essays “Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra e i primi scritti teologici di Francesco Pucci”, and idem, “Nuovi documenti sul soggiorno di Pucci in Inghilterra”.

<sup>17</sup> «Molti di quei testi furono considerati da Cantimori come portatori di idee e di esigenze specificamente italiane più di quanto lo fossero in realtà»; idem, “Alcune considerazioni su «Eretici italiani del Cinquecento»”, *Studi storici* (1993), 769–775: 772.

formidable late sixteenth-century controversialists, namely the Jesuit Nicolas Serarius, the Calvinist François Du Jon, and the Lutheran Lukas Osiander. He made the mistake [...] of letting controversialists dictate the judgement of history.<sup>18</sup> The risk, in Rotondò's view, was to present Pucci, like other Italian heretical figures, as an individual isolated from the European context in which he acted, a risk that he also perceived in a recently published biography, the first one dedicated to the Florentine heretic since De Gaspari's pioneering eighteenth-century work.<sup>19</sup> According to Rotondò, this biography—by two Israeli historians, Elie Barnavi and Miriam Eliav-Feldon,<sup>20</sup> “was too faithful to the interpretation Cantimori gave [...] in 1939.”<sup>21</sup> The definition of Pucci provided by Barnavi and Eliav-Feldon as “a lone man, without a master or disciples, without a Church and without a patron”<sup>22</sup> clashed with the evidence of his own research. Rotondò concluded by providing some examples of Pucci's European connections, which he felt should be investigated further to escape from the narrow confines of this judgement. He mentioned the *Theses* by Samuel Huber of Berne, a copy of which Pucci presented to Pope Clement VIII in 1593, urging him to read it, and the need to investigate the relationship between Pucci and

18 «Il *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* è vist[o] dal Cantimori del tutto al di fuori del contesto del dibattito europeo sull'argomento. Per questa specie di primato e di isolamento del Pucci, Cantimori cercò conferma in tre formidabili controversisti di fine Cinquecento: il gesuita Nicolas Serarius, il calvinista François Du Jon e il luterano Lukas Osiander. Era [...] l'errore di lasciarsi dettare il giudizio storico dai controversisti»; *ibid.*, 773.

19 G.B. De Gaspari, *Commentarius de vita, fatis, operibus et opinionibus Francisci Puccii Filidini*, in *Nuova raccolta d'opuscoli scientifici e filosofici* (Venice, Occhi, 1776), 30, 1–50. On De Gaspari see A. Cetto, “Uno storico trentino muratoriano e riformatore di scuole in Austria nel Settecento: Giovan Battista de Gaspari”, *Studi Trentini di scienze storiche* 29 (1950), 32–69, 358–383; 30 (1951), 55–90, 211–240, 374–418; and Biagioni, “Incontri italo-svizzeri nell'Europa del tardo Cinquecento. Francesco Pucci e Samuel Huber”, *Rivista storica italiana* 111 (1999), 363–422: 371–373.

20 *Le périple de Francesco Pucci. Utopie, hérésie et vérité religieuse dans la Renaissance tardive* (Paris, Hachette, 1988).

21 Rotondò, “Alcune considerazioni,” 773.

22 “Homme seul, sans maître ni disciples, sans Église et sans protecteur;” Barnavi and Eliav-Feldon, *Le périple de Francesco Pucci*, 110. The definition given by the two authors in fact refers to Pucci's second stay in England, when he suffered so acutely his condition of isolation that he decided to enact his own death (cf. *infra*, ch. 11). In other words, Barnavi and Eliav-Feldon's quotation does not summarize *tout court* the two authors' thought about Pucci: they seem fully aware of Pucci's Italian and European connections, as well as of his biography, exemplary in the context of sixteenth century European history (cf. the considerations developed in the *Prologue*, *ibid.*, 7–18).

Huber in the context of the European debate on predestination.<sup>23</sup> Rotondò's suggestion was taken up some years later by one of his pupils, Mario Biagioni. Already the author of a lively discussion of Barnavi and Eliav-Feldon's volume,<sup>24</sup> Biagioni wrote a highly informative essay on the topic, published in *Rivista storica italiana*.<sup>25</sup>

An interesting addendum to the polemic regarding the extent of Pucci's isolation can be found in the discussion initiated by Alain Dufour in the periodical he edits, *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*. This refers to the critical edition of Pucci's most important previously unpublished work, *De Praedestinatione*, edited by Biagioni in 2000 for the series "Studi e testi per la storia religiosa del Cinquecento", which Rotondò edited. After briefly summarising Pucci's doctrine, Dufour's eulogising review<sup>26</sup> asked the provocative question, "But is this still Christian doctrine? It may be today, with its rosewater Gospel, but it was certainly not the case in the sixteenth century. Judaeo-Christian tradition presents us with a personal God who establishes a personal bond with those He loves—and with those who love Him—without any general rule, as is possibly the case with the god of the *philosophes* and scholars that Pascal speaks of".<sup>27</sup> Taking stock of Cantimori's remarks on the Platonizing element in his thinking ("the God of Plato is more abstract than that of the Bible"—"le Dieu de Platon est plus abstrait que celui de la Bible"), Dufour was perhaps inadvertently recalling the terms of the position taken up more than four centuries before by the irenic controversialist François Du Jon in his rebuttal of Pucci's work, insisting on the extraneous nature of Pucci's position with regard to the foundations of Christian theological thinking. In other words, he identified the concepts of natural and rational faith adopted by Pucci as the

<sup>23</sup> Rotondò, "Alcune considerazioni", 773.

<sup>24</sup> Biagioni, "Prospettive di ricerca su Francesco Pucci", *Rivista storica italiana* 107 (1995), 133–152. The author proceeded in the direction suggested by Antonio Rotondò, especially when he insisted on the enduring legacy of Pucci's thought, analysed through the filter of the controversialist use of the term *puccianism*.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *supra*, footnote 9.

<sup>26</sup> «Il reste à louer le travail de M. Biagioni, qui a édité ce texte avec le plus grand soin»; and again: «un grand texte, qui a son importance, publié pour la première fois, et fort bien»; cf. Dufour, review of F. Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 64 (2002) 179–181: 180, 181.

<sup>27</sup> "Mais est-ce encore une doctrine chrétienne? Peut-être de nos jours, où l'Evangile est un service à l'eau de rose. Mais assurément pas au XVI siècle. La tradition judéo-chrétienne fait connaître un Dieu personnel, qui entretient avec ceux qu'il aime—ou ceux qui l'aiment—un lien personnel et non pas une règle générale, comme ce peut être le cas du dieu des philosophes et des savants dont parle Pascal," *ibid.*, 179.

ultimate reason for his isolated position in the European spectrum of the time: “Like so many other sixteenth-century heretics, to whom so many historians are particularly attached, he was merely a precursor of the deists; however, in his own century he was an isolated figure”.<sup>28</sup> In his answer to these remarks,<sup>29</sup> Biagioni followed Rotondò’s example and stressed that the definition of deist attributed to Pucci was the result of an *a posteriori* reconstruction,<sup>30</sup> whereas, when seen in the context of the century, “Pucci’s doctrine on the universal destination of the human race for salvation is no more than an exploration—taken to extreme consequences—of Erasmus’s concept of God’s immense mercy, complicated by some Origenian elements”.<sup>31</sup> It is now undeniable that Pucci’s thinking owes a great deal to the Erasmian and Origenian influence and the thinking of other sixteenth-century heretics, such as Celio Secondo Curione and Giorgio Siculo. However, it is also true that none of them, least of all Erasmus, produced such a crystal-clear definition of the concept of natural faith or rational faith. No one went so far as Pucci in his declaration that, from the womb onwards, man enjoys a natural faith given by God to all human beings, thanks to which he enjoys the efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice and is therefore destined for eternal salvation. While Erasmus’s concept of the scope of divine mercy still had strong moral connotations, Curione’s Latitudinarianism was the result of the extreme amplification of the concept of divine predestination and Siculo’s emphasis was on man’s capacity to achieve salvation by using his own forces, Pucci’s universalism was the consequence of a “breath of the Holy Spirit”, a natural faith that God denied no one.

It is therefore not hard to understand why his sixteenth-century readers were left speechless by these doctrines and it is not surprising that the three controversialists who confuted his *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* largely agreed with the fact that his doctrines lay outside the borders of Christianity.<sup>32</sup> For this reason, it is not possible to accept in its entirety the affirmation that

28 “Comme tant d’autres hérétiques du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, auxquels tant d’historiens attachent leurs préférences, il n’est qu’un précurseur des déistes, mais il est, dans son siècle, un isolé;” *ibid.*

29 Biagioni, “Droit de réponse”, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 65 (2003), 521–523.

30 In the matter of Dufour’s definition of Pucci as a forerunner of Deism, Biagioni wrote that «en réalité la thèse de Pucci ‘déiste’ a été formulée pour la première fois au début du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle par le controversiste luthérien Thomas Itting et sa *Dissertatio de Puccianismo* (Leipzig, 1712) est un témoignage significatif de l’origine du déisme, non pas un document sur la vie religieuse du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle» (*ibid.*, 523).

31 “La doctrine de Pucci sur l’universelle destination du genre humain au salut, n’est rien d’autre qu’un approfondissement, jusqu’aux extrêmes conséquences, de la conception d’Erasme de l’*immensa misericordia Dei*, compliquée par des éléments origéniens;” *ibid.*

32 See *infra*, ch. vi.

“to understand the deep roots of Pucci’s thinking in this sixteenth-century theological school of thought, [...] it is necessary to consider [...] the confutations of Pucci’s doctrine that were presented in the years 1592–1593 by three theologians of undoubted fame: [...] certainly not evidence of Pucci’s isolation!”<sup>33</sup> It is clear that Pucci’s works have to be read in their European context, also as a reflection of contemporary debates (such as the violent disagreement about predestination in the second half of the 1580s in the Protestant world) and it is hoped that future research on this fascinating and enigmatic figure will follow the direction suggested by those who have studied the contact network developed by Pucci in certain Lutheran circles in Berne, in particular with Samuel Huber.<sup>34</sup> However, it must not be forgotten that one of the three controversialists was the same Lukas Osiander who had distinguished himself, together with Jacobus Andreä, as the fiercest opponent of Théodore de Bèze’s rigid predestination theories. Therefore, even one of the fiercest opponents of Calvinist predestinarianism considered Francesco Pucci’s theses to be indefensible and, more importantly, worthy of demolition.<sup>35</sup>

4. If we wish to find a key to understand a figure as elusive as Pucci, we should perhaps abandon the field of controversy.<sup>36</sup> Pucci did not live in isolation and he built up a network of friendships and contacts in the course of his wanderings around Europe, beginning with his ties with Florentine exiles in Lyons, Possevino and the French Jesuits, the same members of the *familia charitatis* highlighted by Barnavi and Eliav-Feldon, and Francesco Betti and Prospero Provana. His teachers and friends included men of the calibre of Jacopo Corbinelli and Antonio del Corro; in Theodor Zwinger he found a staunch admirer,<sup>37</sup> and in Tommaso Campanella he found an attentive listener

33 “Per comprendere le profondi radici del pensiero di Pucci in questa corrente teologica del xvi secolo, [...] bisogna prendere in considerazione [...] le confutazioni della dottrina del Pucci svolte, negli anni 1592–1593, da tre teologi di indubbio prestigio: [...] non [...] certo testimonianze dell’isolamento del Pucci”; Biagioni, “Droit de réponse,” 523.

34 Another example of this fruitful point of view has been offered by Biagioni in relation to Pucci’s relationship with Theodore Zwinger; see Id., “Prospettive di ricerca,” 144–145, and idem, “Universalismo,” 343–345.

35 Cf. *infra*, ch. VI.

36 In his *Réponse a M. Biagioni*, Dufour wrote: “Vous nous dites que Pucci n’est pas un isolé, puisqu’il y a Samuel Huber. [...] Disons donc, si vous voulez, que Pucci et Huber *sont* des isolés. Cela ne change pas grand chose;” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 65 (2003), 524–525.

37 Zwinger and Pucci first met in Basel at the end of the 1570s. In 1586 Zwinger dedicated one book of volume 27 of his *Theatrum humanae vitae* (Basileae, ex officina Frobeniana) to the issue “De religioni naturali” (which had been largely dealt with by Pucci), with

and dedicated follower. There is no doubt that his doctrines were rooted in sixteenth-century theological thinking and that he frequently showed that he was receptive to the happenings and controversies of his age, starting from the Colloquy of Montbéliard (1586) and the predestination dispute that divided the late sixteenth-century Protestant world, or the early developments in the Molinist question. However, the extreme consequences which he took them to not only led to the hostility of the institutional churches that he came into contact with and attempted to impose his beliefs on, but also prevented him from establishing lasting relationships and finding support from other heretics like him who were deeply intolerant of the constituted churches. To this end, the example of the controversy with the anti-Trinitarian Fausto Sozzini is emblematic. The idea of the immortality of the first man, that typically Neoplatonic view of man as an earthly god (referring to Adam's divine origin) defended by Pucci in the long dispute that took place in Basle and Krakow between 1578 and 1585, was no more than a corollary to his thesis on the efficacy of natural reason. If the patriarchs and prophets who lived before the birth of Christ had succeeded in achieving salvation, it was due to the innate faith which had revealed knowledge of God to their hearts. The same was true for infants and populations living in ignorance of the revealed word (such as those in the New World); natural reason was what remained of the original perfection of man after the original sin, and it was sufficient to achieve salvation.<sup>38</sup> What Pucci defended against Sozzini was a concept of natural and innate faith that separated the problem of salvation from the question of divine revelation and acceptance of the Holy Text. To put it another way, Pucci felt that revelation occurred even without the Word.<sup>39</sup> When Fausto Sozzini denied the immortal nature of the first man, he was simply expressing a widely held conviction in the theological culture of his day: the rejection of the idea of natural knowledge of God.<sup>40</sup> Salvation was closely associated with knowledge and observance of Christ's Word. Just like Du Jon, Osiander, Serario and Bellarmino, Sozzini felt

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special attention dedicated to the relationship between natural law and revelation, to the amplitude of God's reign and to the fate of people in the New World who ignored Sacred Scriptures. The awareness of the dangers in these types of issues made him desist from developing his ideas; his dissertation comes to a halt, in fact, after the first introductory page; cf. Rotondò, "Nuove testimonianze", 284 and Biagioni, "La ragione dell'immortalità: la disputa tra Francesco Pucci e Fausto Sozzini 'De statu primi hominis ante lapsum,'" in *Faustus Socinus and His Heritage*, ed. Lech Szczucki (Cracow, 2005), 53- 89: p. 65.

<sup>38</sup> Biagioni, "La ragione dell'immortalità," 63.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85. On the same issue, the Lutheran Osiander would insist a few years later (cf. *infra*, ch. vi).

that the absence of death—the overcoming of the *vulnus* of the original sin—could only come about through divine grace and not independently of it, as Pucci claimed.

The attempt to save Pucci from his (presumed) isolation and, more generally, to offer a possible solution to the questions posed in this intense historiographical debate must, in my opinion, address the close connection between his doctrines and the Italian origins of his exile.<sup>41</sup> For this reason, the starting point of the present work is his education in Florence, which has so far mostly been overlooked; the subsequent events in his relationship with French culture and his desire to return to the fold can be read in the light of his background situation.

This has been done in the belief that the story of Francesco Pucci is not the extravagant tale of a rebel spirit or a visionary, but rather one of a typical representative of the religious crisis in Italy in the sixteenth century. In this way, an examination of his life story and his intellectual evolution will make it possible to cast new light on certain developments and achievements in the so-called Italian Reformation. The story of this Florentine merchant who possibly became a heretic quite by chance and roamed around half of Europe courageously defending his ideas against the most authoritative religious powers, only to then yearn to return to the bosom of the Church of Rome in the deep conviction that he belonged to the *Ecclesia catholica* in which he had been raised, closely resembles those of some of Pucci's peers, many of whom he actually met, such as the humanist Gian Michele Bruto, the rich banker of Krakow Prospero Provana and Agostino Doni, a philosopher and doctor from Cosenza. These men were all secularly educated in the Catholic faith in the early stages of their training and left Italy, but did not entirely sever ties with

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. to this end Massimo Firpo's observations concerning Cantimori's *Eretici*, where the former underlines that the “exiles *religionis causa* who fill these pages appear on the stage only after their exile, without their previous Italian biography being examined nor even briefly summarized;” idem, “Per una discussione su Delio Cantimori e la nuova edizione degli ‘Eretici italiani,’ *Studi storici* 34 (1993), 737–756: 740. Firpo highlighted how “from those pages arises the necessity to move back to their Italian origins to better understand the roots of those fascinating human and spiritual journeys, the anxieties and experiences that impelled them out of their native land, their needs and ideals;” idem, “La Riforma italiana del Cinquecento. Le premesse storiografiche,” *Schifanoia* 19 (1998), 7–43, translated in English in *The Italian Reformation*, xi–lvi, and now also republished in idem, *Disputar di cose pertinente alla fede. Studi sulla vita religiosa del Cinquecento italiano* (Milan, Unicopli, 2003), 61. See also similar reflections in Rotondò, “Alcune considerazioni,” 771.

their homeland and ultimately decided to return to Catholicism.<sup>42</sup> This was not only due to what might be called an innate attachment to their roots—Pucci being the best case in point—but also because of their particular way of perceiving their membership of the Catholic Church and even of interpreting the Church itself.<sup>43</sup> More than anyone else though, Pucci—who the morning after his abjuration to the Papal Nuncio strove at all costs to return to Rome in order to present the same doctrines he had abjured to the Pope and discuss them, nurturing the ingenuous but authentic conviction that there had to be and could be room for everyone in the *Ecclesia catholica*—somehow evoked, nearly five decades later, the experience of the group of intellectuals and ecclesiastics who had gathered around the charismatic figure of Juan de Valdes in the late 1530s and the 1540s, and had chosen Cardinal Reginald Pole as their leader after the latter's death. Men like Marcantonio Flaminio, Pietro Carnesecchi, and Giovanni Morone had in their own way welcomed the new wind blowing from the north, reworking the Lutheran message in accordance with a highly original canon that was best expressed in the *Benefit of Christ* (Venice, 1543). The language and the doctrine clashed with Protestant teaching, driven by a spirit that was anything but obsequious to the master of the German Reformation, a stance effectively summed up by Pietro Carnesecchi during his last trial in Rome in 1566–67, when he recalled that “neither Flaminio nor Priuli entirely approved of Luther's doctrine, saying that as it was *extra Ecclesiam* it was consequently *extra caritatem* and that, although he had commented well on many matters and correctly interpreted many passages of the Holy Scriptures, one could not for this reason alone conclude that he possessed the Spirit of God, except in so far as God granted benefits and edification to his chosen few.”<sup>44</sup>

42 Different case studies concern Simone Simoni, a heretic from Lucca who returned to Catholicism for personal and professional convenience; and another, never fully clarified, of the antitrinitarian Giorgio Biandratà, who also came close to converting to Catholicism for opportunistic reasons; see M. Firpo, “Alcuni documenti sulla conversione al cattolicesimo dell'eretico lucchese Simone Simoni,” *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, Classe di lettere e filosofia, s. III, 4 (1974), 1479–1502.

43 On this question, see M. Venard, “Une Église, deux Églises, pas d'Église? Le cas français,” and A. Prosperi, “Una chiesa, due chiese, nessuna chiesa. Riforma italiana ed eretici italiani,” in *La Réforme en France et en Italie. Contacts, comparaisons et contrastes*, études réunies par P. Benedict, S. Seidel Menchi et A. Tallon (Rome, École française de Rome, 2007), respectively 579–593 and 595–634.

44 “Né il Flaminio né il Priuli approvassino intieramente la dottrina di esso Lutero, dicendo che essendo *extra Ecclesiam* era per conseguente *extra caritatem* et che, sebbene aveva detto bene in molte cose et interpretato bene molti luoghi della Scrittura, non si poteva per questo concludere che havesse lo spirito di Dio se non quanto Dio li l'havesse concesso

What can be read between the lines of Carnesecchi's words is the outline of a third possible way, one that was hostile to the teachings of the ecclesiastical hierarchies, but equally removed from the Lutheran message. This wholly original way of explaining membership of the *Ecclesia catholica* even spread to bishops of Rome such as Tommaso Sanfelice, who ordered that sermons should be delivered in his diocese on the doctrine of justification "in some way he said was neither like that of the Lutherans and nor that of the Catholics."<sup>45</sup> As Francesco Negri wrote polemically from his exile in Switzerland about the heterogeneous group that recognised Cardinal Reginald Pole's leadership, it was a "new school of Christianity ordered in their manner, in which they do not deny that the justification of man is for Jesus Christ, but then they will not admit the consequences that inevitably derive therefrom, so they want to say Mass, they want to observe a thousand other Papist superstitions and unholy practices."<sup>46</sup>

The most advanced result of this approach was the development of a surprisingly "mild doctrine on predestination" which ultimately denied the very essence of the harsh Protestant form of predestination with God's sentence, beyond all appeal, of condemnation for some and salvation for others, and instead extended its beneficial effects to all humanity. This mild doctrine, as we shall see, to some extent inspired Francesco Pucci's theology: his attack on the Calvinist doctrine of predestinarianism had its roots in the "mild little book" dedicated to the benefit of Christ, around which Pucci had constructed a heresy that contained naturalistic and Platonizing elements.<sup>47</sup>

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a beneficio et edificatione de' suoi eletti;" M. Firpo, *Riforma protestante ed eresie nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1993), 90; idem, "Giorgio Siculo. Discussione del volume di Adriano Prosperi," *Storica* 6 (2000), 143–152.

45 "Ad un certo modo che lui diceva che non era come quella de lutherani né come quella de catholici;" A. Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro grande. Storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta* (Milan, Feltrinelli, 2000), 190.

46 Una "nuova scola d'un christianesimo ordinato alloro modo, ove essi non niegano la giustificatione dell'huomo essere per Giesù Cristo sì, ma non vogliono poi admettere le consequentie, che indi necessariamente ne seguono, perciò che vogliono havere le messe, vogliono osservare mille altre papistice supestit[ti]oni et empietà;" *Della tragedia di M. Francesco Negro Bassanese intitolata libero arbitrio, edizione seconda con accrescimento, dell'anno MDL*, c. b 6v; Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro grande*, 189.

47 Indirect evidence of Pucci's attachment to this doctrine is the enthusiasm with which he welcomed Samuel Huber's *Theses*, a work centered around the universal efficacy of Christ's sacrifice (see Biagioli, "Incontri"). However, we should not forget that Pucci's doctrine diverged from Huber's because of his insistence on natural faith and more generally because of the 'platonizing' aspects of his theological thought (see *infra*, ch. vi).

In some way, Pucci's vicissitudes seem to echo the story of the group of people who unexpectedly found unity around this text. The tragic political and religious failure of Pucci's utopias reminds the historian of the unsuccessful conclusion of the experience of the *Spirituali*, namely the failure of the political opportunity offered to them by the opening of the Council of Trent; the idea of creating space for the free expression of ideas within the institutional framework of the Church of Rome, the hope, as has recently been written, "that it is possible to reconcile the doctrine of justification for reasons of faith with the existing ecclesiastical institutions, as one might say, a juxtaposition of revolution and conservation."<sup>48</sup> Pucci's obstinacy to find a way back to Rome to retie the thread that had snapped when he went exile and his firm conviction that he had every right to belong to an *Ecclesia catholica* which could and should accept conflicting doctrinal positions indirectly recalled the hopes of the variegated group of Italian *Spirituali*.<sup>49</sup>

With his tragic but coherent choice to return to Rome, Pucci seems to retrace, five decades later, the steps of those who had neither wanted nor been able to take their doctrinal choices to their extreme consequences by distinguishing their path from that of the Church of Rome. They had refused to do so not simply because of an instinctive Nicodemite attitude aimed at self-preservation but also, above all, in the obstinate hope of being able to cultivate their ideas within the *Ecclesia catholica*, the same hope that Pucci nurtured until the last moments of his life. Flaminio and others felt that Luther's great sin was that he had shattered the unity of Christianity, and Pucci's profound dislike of Lutherans and Calvinists was rooted in the same conviction.<sup>50</sup>

Firmly based on the political support of Charles V, the project that involved Pole, the *Spirituali*, and the imperial party was definitely much more concrete and realistic than the millenarian Prophetism and Utopianism that fuelled Francesco Pucci's irenic hopes. In providing a profile of this religious exile without forgetting his political aspirations, we are aware that the category

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48 Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro grande*, 190.

49 To this end, see Cantimori's still valuable concluding observations in "Nicodemismo e speranze conciliari nel Cinquecento italiano," in idem, *Studi di storia* (Turin, Einaudi, 1959), 518–536: esp. 535–36.

50 See Pucci's important letter written in March 1584 from Cracow to his brother Giovanni in which he called Luther's and Calvin's followers "briachi" (drunks), who "in this miserable time boasted about being God's prophets and reformers of the Church, and instead have unexpectedly transformed and divided it" (Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 63; see also Biagioni, "Introduzione," to Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, 3; cf. also *infra*, ch. II).

of utopianism may seem unconvincing to some. It has been authoritatively written that

an authentic utopian is in no way a dreamer, but must on the contrary be considered a person with an extreme sense of realism. Those who are not realists, who have no strong sense of the relationship between forces, of the possibilities and the social and cultural context in which they live are not utopians; they are what Machiavelli would have called “disarmed prophets”, namely people who throw themselves into the fray without assessing the conditions and limits of their possible deeds, without calculating, though also taking into account the risk of losing their own lives, whether or not there are reasonable chances of success.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, if Machiavelli had somehow been able to meet Francesco Pucci, it is easy to imagine that he would have attributed him with the same features of a disarmed prophet that he recognized in a man who inspired Pucci more than anyone else—the friar from Ferrara, Girolamo Savonarola.<sup>52</sup>

Much more than the fortunes of other prominent figures in the Italian diaspora like Giorgio Biandrata and Simone Simoni, the story of Pucci and the failure of his irenic and Conciliarist hopes clearly reveal the gradual exhaustion of the vital momentum of the Italian Reformation, reiterating the impossibility of succeeding with the political project which had united some of the most authoritative representatives of the Church hierarchies and Italian culture in the 1540s. Just as Carnesecchi paid for the project’s failure with his life and Pole almost did, in a context where the role of the Inquisition was markedly stronger than a few decades before Pucci could not escape the same fate. Indeed, as the Counter-Reformation was inspired by the desire to oppose that type of reform and the Roman Inquisition was created to strike down the leading

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51 “L’autentico utopista non è affatto un sognatore e, anzi, dev’essere considerato un personaggio dotato di estremo realismo. Chi non è realista, chi non ha un forte senso dei rapporti di forze, delle possibilità, del contesto sociale e culturale in cui si trova a operare, non è un utopista; è semmai quello che Machiavelli avrebbe chiamato un profeta disarmato, cioè uno che si getta nell’azione senza aver misurato le condizioni e i limiti degli interventi possibili, senza aver calcolato, sia pure mettendo nel conto anche il rischio della propria vita, se esistano o meno probabilità ragionevoli di successo;” L. Firpo, “L’utopismo,” in *Storia delle idee politiche economiche e sociali*, directed by L. Firpo, 3, *Umanesimo e Rinascimento* (Turin, Utet, 1987) 811–888: 811.

52 G. Cadoni, “Il profeta disarmato. Intorno al giudizio di Machiavelli su Girolamo Savonarola,” *La Cultura* (2001), 239–266.

figures in that dangerous political project,<sup>53</sup> it is not hard to understand why a later dreamy imitator of this singular desire for reform should have ended his days sentenced to death by the Inquisition itself.<sup>54</sup>

5. The story of Francesco Pucci is therefore an Italian story, not only because it starts and reaches its tragic conclusion in Italy, but also because it highlights much of the potential and limits of the Italian Reformation. His story is, however, also markedly European, firstly because a large portion of his life was spent outside Italy, and secondly because it is a story of an Italian heretic who brought his wealth of ideas to Europe, thus contributing to the development of the founding doctrines of our civilization, above all regarding religious tolerance. It is above all the story of a disarmed prophet who fully incarnated the spirit of Europe at the time. It was a cosmopolitan Europe that—in the decades preceding the Defenestration of Prague and the beginning of the Thirty Years' War—allowed itself the luxury of welcoming men of culture, intellectuals, artists, and magicians to the most important princely courts, all united in a common Universalist dream to rid the continent of Inquisitorial repression and forced religious confessionalization. Diplomats like Philip Sidney, Henry Wotton, and Hubert Languet, scientists and magicians like John Dee and Edward Kelley, prophets like Guillaume Postel and philosophers like Francesco Patrizi, Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella were among the indisputable protagonists on the European cultural scene in those years and had privileged contact with the most important European sovereigns. The utopian dream that was a very common dream in the first decades of the sixteenth century—as expounded by Thomas More and Francis Bacon—had been transformed by the spreading violence of the religious wars<sup>55</sup> into a Universalist mystique that was not devoid of certain political aspirations. The England of Elizabeth I, the Bohemia of Rudolph II, the France of Henry III and Henry IV, as well as the “mythical” Republic of Venice, incarnated to the eyes of half of Europe—in different ways and at different times—the same imperial ideal, the same idea of universal monarchy, of “pacific religious imperialism”. The changing sixteenth-century representations of the myth of Astrea, Queen Elizabeth's proud Anglicanism, the cautious religious tolerance of the Prague imperial court and the indomitable Gallic identity of the French monarchy were seen by many as an indispensable political guarantee for the creation of a millenary and Universalist Utopia with clear anti-Spanish and anti-Hapsburg

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53 The reference here is to the essential works by Massimo Firpo.

54 See *infra*, my Epilogue.

55 This is the title of the recent ‘plural’ synthesis by C. Vivanti, *Le guerre di religione nel Cinquecento* (Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2007).

overtones.<sup>56</sup> In many cases, the European sovereigns were perfectly happy to foster this Universalist myth and welcomed the prophetic cantors of their political mission with open arms. Pucci's biographical and intellectual journey across Europe, taking in London, Paris, and Prague, and his desperate search for influential supporters to accept his proposals clearly express the spirit of the age. The characteristic executions in the late sixteenth century—with Pucci and Giordano Bruno three years later—were a clear signal that this great phase of European culture was about to come to a definitive end. In the face of the persistent advance of the Counter-Reformation, their demands were followed up in Marcantonio de Dominis's *Latitudinarian Utopia* and the Rosicrucians' Hermetic Enlightenment. However, although these utopias were furthered by the neo-imperial and Universalist dreams that flourished in the early decades of the seventeenth century around the King of England, James I, and his daughter Elizabeth's husband, the Elector Palatine, Frederick V, after the dramatic defeat of the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, they were destined to continue to develop along underground and esoteric paths.<sup>57</sup>

6. One further consideration may be useful at this point. If we imagine that every individual acts according to the movements of a mental clock (not necessarily like a real clock), we could legitimately hypothesize that Pucci's mental clock stopped as soon as he left the Italian peninsula. This happened in 1563, the year in which the Council of Trent ended. It might be tempting to interpret his stubborn defence of his interpretation of the canons of Trent, as reiterated in many of his writings,<sup>58</sup> as the freezing of time, an anachronism or inadequate historical and theological knowledge on Pucci's part. After having left the Italian peninsula when the Council ended and not having been able

56 The obvious reference is to F.A. Yates, *Astraea: the Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London- Boston, Routledge & K. Paul, 1975); see also R.J.W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: a Study in Intellectual History, 1576–1612* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1973), H. Louthan, *The Quest for Compromise: Peacemakers in Counter-Reformation Vienna* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997) and, for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France, C. Vivanti, *Lotta politica e pace religiosa in Francia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Turin, Einaudi, 1963), 74–131, and Id., "Henri IV, the Gallic Hercules," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 30 (1967), 176–197, now also in idem, *Incontri con la storia. Politica, cultura e società nell'Europa moderna*, ed. by G. Pedullà and M. Gotor (Rome, Seam, 2001).

57 In addition to the classic study by F.A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London, Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), and to the essay by E. de Mas, *L'attesa del secolo aureo (1603–1625). Saggio di storia delle idee del secolo XVII* (Florence, Olschki, 1982), see W.B. Patterson, *King James I and VI and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997).

58 See *infra*, ch. IV.

to have first-hand experience of the decisive phase of the definition of post-Tridentine doctrines—the period when clashes between the higher echelons of the ecclesiastical institutions rotated around the interpretation and definition of what had necessarily (and deliberately) been left unsaid and ill-defined in Trent—it is as if Pucci was a relic of a war that had long since been fought and concluded.

However, the profound and ingenuous passion with which he defended his interpretation of the canons of Trent and insistently appealed to papal authority for approval of his way of reasoning cannot be dismissed simply as the result of utopian-tinged ignorance, or as the sign of a historical anachronism. On the contrary, it appears to be confirmation of the fact that even at the turn of the century, almost three decades later, this process of post-Tridentine definition was in many ways still incomplete; it was impossible to resolve ongoing clandestine contrasts between two or more movements, two or more concepts of the Church that had been vying within the institution since the initial stages of the Council.<sup>59</sup>

In a recent paper, Franco Motta clearly singled out two very distinct projects within the sixteenth-century Church of Rome: a semi-Pelagian train of thought that favoured the active role of the human faculties in cooperation with the work of grace and an Augustinian way of thinking marked by the idea of the superiority of faith and the inanity of man's natural strength. The former can be seen in figures such as Albert Pigghe and Ambrogio Catarino, who were educated in the arena of anti-Lutheran controversy, or Jesuits such as Diego Laínez and Alfonso Salmerón who combined their semi-Pelagian theological anthropology with an ecclesiology based on the primacy of the Pope and the pre-eminence of the Holy See over the episcopal body. The latter included people like Johan Nys, known as Driedo, and the other master from Leuven Jacques Masson, known as Latomus, who refined their anti-Pelagianism in the struggle against the influence of Erasmus of Rotterdam and his idea of the dignity of man, which precedes and is independent of the justifying action of grace, in the trilingual *Collegium* in Leuven. There were also distinguished individuals such as Girolamo Seripando, Bartolomé Carranza, Michael Baius, and Pedro de Soto, all of whom favoured an Augustinian form of theological anthropology and supported the same episcopal ecclesiology that found its maximum expression in the defence of the bishops' divine right of residence. Compared to these two alternative projects, the theology of the Council of Trent showed itself to be above all a theology of compromise. It was "inflexible

59 On the inconclusiveness of many decisions taken at Trent, cf. G. Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell'eresia. Ambrogio Catarino Politi 1484–1553* (Florence, Olschki, 2007).

and elastic at the same time: inflexible when it was necessary to define a clear boundary with Protestantism, for example for matters regarding justification and the Sacraments, but elastic in fields where mediation and the authority of the various traditions involved prevented any precise definition of certain points of doctrine by means of the instrument of heresiological classification.<sup>60</sup> The mediation achieved in Trent did not, however, prevent these two opposing movements from continuing along their chosen paths: they re-emerged in the following decades and centuries, cropping up from time to time in the clashes between Molinists and Thomists, and between Jesuits and Jansenists.

If the final results of Pucci's doctrinal considerations—the idea of natural faith—did not place him clearly beyond the confines of Catholic orthodoxy, or if we chose to support his insistence on defining himself a Catholic until the very last moments of his life, we would not find it difficult to place him somewhere within the semi-Pelagian movement. This is not only because of the vigour with which he defended man's natural predisposition for faith and the scope of divine mercy, which led the Catholics to accuse him openly of Pelagianism, or his notorious anti-Calvinism, but also because of his under-estimation of the role of the bishop in the context of his original ecclesiology (which can clearly be seen in his Conciliarist vision firmly based on the principle of the divine inspiration of all believers). It is also due to his controversial defence of the Pope's absolute primacy, which was evident in his incessant appeals to the different popes in the final decade of his life.<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, Pucci's appeal to Bellarmino's authority and the dedication of his two main works to this Jesuit cardinal<sup>62</sup> cannot and must not be dismissed as a mere gesture of adulation intended to compensate for the damage he suffered from the ferocious attacks of the Bohemian Jesuits, or as an unlikely attempt to win Bellarmino over to his teachings. On the contrary, these dedications should be seen in their precise historical context; Bellarmino presented himself as the authoritative proponent of an attempt at high-level doctrinal mediation,

60 «Rigida ed elastica al tempo stesso: rigida dove si trattò di stabilire un netto confine con il protestantesimo, come in materia di giustificazione e di sacramenti, elastica nei campi in cui le necessità della mediazione e l'autorità delle diverse tradizioni in gioco non consentirono di precisare determinati punti di dottrina attraverso lo strumento della classificazione heresiologica»; F. Motta, “Roma Lovanio Trento. Una teologia conciliare?,” in *Teologi e teologia a Roma tra Cinque e Seicento*, ed. by F. Cantù e P. Broggio, *Roma moderna e contemporanea* 18 (2011), 57–80.

61 On the significant reference to Pigghe and Catharinus as important sources of Pucci's theological thought cf. *infra*, ch. I. On his idea of papal authority and his conciliarist inclinations, see *infra*, ch. III.

62 Cf. *infra*, ch. IV.

as a theological synthesis between these two distinct projects within the sixteenth-century Church of Rome: in short, a mediator of the highest authority to whom it was possible to appeal to account for one's reasoning.<sup>63</sup>

7. These considerations subtract nothing from the utopian character of Pucci's thinking and the radical nature of his doctrinal position. At the same time, they help us to understand the man and his vicissitudes in the context of his time, so that we do not dismiss him as an isolated spirit, a restless thinker who did not fit in. It could be said that his doctrines and utopias were bound to lead to his death, but it cannot be concluded that his fate was marked out from the very beginning. Pucci experienced all the contradictions of his age and his story helps us to see these in a new, clearer light.

8. As the reader will have gathered from reading these introductory remarks, Francesco Pucci is not a proper theologian and does not have a coherent theological vision of his own, just as he is neither a politician nor a political thinker. He is a religious man (although not an ecclesiastic) and has an interest in theology, but it would be a misinterpretation to treat him as a proper theologian. If we asked him questions normally levelled at a theologian (such as 'What tradition do you belong to?' or 'How has your theological thinking evolved?'), we would not get the expected answers and would definitely be left with the feeling of not having grasped the essence of his thought at all. Pucci's ideas are the result of many different stimuli, each one the result of a contribution by a different author and many deriving from his singular reading of the Holy Scriptures. Some specific aspects of his thinking may come from a recognizable theological tradition, while others were partly inspired by a theological treatise he had heard of or read. It is actually extremely difficult to reconstruct the way in which his ideas were formed, because he rarely quotes from any author or text other than the Bible. He only mentions a short list of authors he was indebted to once in his writings and once in a private letter, as I highlight in the first chapter. He knew the Bible very well, but he did not receive a theological education: after all, he was a Florentine merchant. Part of my effort will be to understand what his readings could have been and which contexts might have influenced his ideas, especially in the early stages of his 'career'. However, the result could in no way be considered a coherent theological vision; he is much more a polemicist than a theologian. He reacts to others' doctrines and randomly builds up his theological vision in response to theirs. The main reason why Pucci deserves a monographic study is not that he was an important

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63 For a similar perspective, see S. Ferretto, "Una chiesa rinnovata" e "un popolo fatto tutto santo": la visione del Cristianesimo tra riflessione teologica e millenarismo in Francesco Pucci," *Archivio storico italiano* 145 (2007), 77–120.

theologian or politician of his time, but the fact that he is a kind of mirror reflecting the complexity of the sixteenth-century Italian and European religious dimension. Through his intellectual biography we can understand for example how certain traditions and ideas that circulated in Renaissance Italy came into contact with other European contexts, how well (or badly) they were received (or rejected) and how they contributed to undermining the dominant discourse of religious confessionalization. His ideas often provoked strong reactions, because his interlocutors were not at all used to his kind of strangely arranged religious proposal. Some simply considered him a fool or treated him like someone who did not even deserve a reply. Others took him seriously and reacted to his ideas. This book does not deal with Francesco Pucci in order to understand his theological thought *per se*—in any case, it would be the wrong target when addressing this kind of author. The book the reader has before him or her is aimed at highlighting how Pucci and his ideas can help us to understand his age better. In order to achieve this target, the fact that he lacks theological coherence is much less important than the fact that his ideas were discussed by his contemporaries. As you may already have understood, what you will find in the following pages is far closer to intellectual than to theological history.

# Becoming a Heretic in Sixteenth-Century Florence: Francesco Pucci and His Intellectual Education

## 1 In the Labyrinth of Sources: Between History and Autobiography

Francesco Pucci was born in Florence in 1543. He came from a wealthy family and received an education that bore clear marks of humanistic values. The writings of Girolamo Savonarola and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, together with the spiritual works of Petrarch and Dante, were the daily bread which, “from his early childhood”, satisfied his hunger for knowledge, as he strove to sate an irresistible “inclination for all things divine”. As he wrote many years later, at a tender age he showed an “inclination and a more than ordinary interest in listening carefully to holy subjects and authorities, and studying authors who deal with divine matters, according to the advice and customs of my parents who constantly had the Holy Scriptures and the writings of Savonarola and similar excellent preachers in their hands and on their lips.”<sup>1</sup> At the age of eighteen, he entered the Accademia dei Lucidi, founded in 1560 by the grammarian Eufrosino Lapini “for the use of the young nobles of Florence” (*per esercizio dei nobili giovanetti fiorentini*), as its deed of foundation established.<sup>2</sup> In April 1561, he was entrusted with the oration celebrating the election of Filippo Nerli to the Academy Consulate.<sup>3</sup>

The years of Pucci’s transition from early adolescence to youth—he was fifteen years old in 1558—were dominated by the all-powerful figure of Paul IV. It is worth highlighting the climate of repression in his five-year papacy (1555–59), the number of inquisitorial trials held and the issue of the first Universal

<sup>1</sup> “L’inclinazione e ’l gusto più che l’ordinario, [...] di udire attentamente i propositi e gli uffizi sacri, e di studiare gli autori che delle cose divine trattano, secondo l’avviso e costume de’ miei parenti, i quali avevano sempre in mano e in bocca la Scrittura santa, gli scritti del Savonarola e di simili eccellenti predicatori;” letter to Pope Clement VIII, Amsterdam, August 5, 1592, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> On the Accademia dei Lucidi, see S. Salvini, *Fasti consolari dell’Accademia fiorentina* (Florence, per Gio. Gaetano Tartini e Santi Franchi, 1717), 235, and M. Maylender, *Storia delle Accademie d’Italia*, 5 vols. (Bologna, Cappelli, 1926–1930), IV, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Pucci’s choice (still shrouded in darkness) to take the tonsure seem to pertain to those same years. “Initiatus sacris ordinibus”, “Initiated to holy orders.” with these words he was referred to in an inquisitorial register dated 1592 (cf. Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 16, and doc. 159, 220–221).

Index in Rome in order to remind the reader that there is an exception to every rule, as in many respects, Cosimo I's Florence managed to avoid the cold wind that blew from Rome over the entire peninsula. Indeed, the profound hostility that marked the relationship between the Holy See and the Medici court meant that Florence was guaranteed a form of monitored freedom. It is enough to consider, for example, the difficulties experienced by the Roman Inquisitors in applying the Pauline Index in Medici territory to understand how booksellers and the reading public enjoyed a degree of freedom unheard of elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> This must be borne in mind when analysing the intellectual development of a Florentine religious exile and examining what he read and, more broadly, the social and political conditions in which he approached the world of culture. Likewise, it must be stressed that history took a new turn just a few years later during the pontificates of Pius IV (1559–65) and Pius V (1566–72), when the *détente* in political and diplomatic relations between Rome and France led to more active collaboration by Cosimo I and reduced the margins of freedom that many in Florence were rightly proud of. Therefore, paradoxically, while much of Italy benefited from the moderate change with which Pius IV mitigated his predecessor's repressive intransigence, the new balance of power in Florence soon forced everyone—intellectuals, courtiers and men of the Church—to contend with a new oppressive conformism.<sup>5</sup> The idea that Pucci's decision to leave Italy—a decision taken in the late 1560s when he was dividing his time between Florence and Lyons—was related to this change of atmosphere is a more than plausible hypothesis, although it lacks any documentary evidence.

Pucci was therefore influenced by Savonarola, Pico, and Petrarch and Dante's spiritual works, along with a long list of authors that he cited in his writings in the 1580s, albeit somewhat generally, as the direct or indirect sources of his doctrines. He probably read many of these in his early years in Florence: Giorgio Siculo, Francesco Zorzi, Ambrogio Catarino Politi, Agostino Steuco, Albert Pigghe, Thomas Cajetan, Girolamo Osorio and Bartolomé Carranza. In the following decades, he also became familiar with the Jesuits Roberto

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<sup>4</sup> See A. Panella, "L'introduzione a Firenze dell'Indice di Paolo IV," *Rivista storica degli Archivi toscani* 1 (1929), 11–25. For a description of the relationship between Florence and Rome in those years cf. M. Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo a San Lorenzo. Eresia, politica e cultura nella Firenze di Cosimo I* (Turin, Einaudi, 1997), 380 ff.

<sup>5</sup> See Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo*, 393 ff. On this turning point, which culminated in pope Pius V bestowing the Grand Ducal title on Cosimo I, see also G. Fragnito, "Arte e religione nel consolidamento del principato mediceo," *Rivista storica italiana* 111 (1999), 235–249: 247–248.

Bellarmino and Edmund Campion.<sup>6</sup> Is it right to think of these authors as members of a more or less uniform group and single out some common traits among them, just as Pucci grouped them together when he made the long list in one of his last works? Furthermore, to what extent can they be compared to Pucci? If, for example, we start with Cardinal de Vio, add three of the greatest sixteenth-century Catholic controversialists Ambrogio Catarino Politi, Albert Pigghe, and Roberto Bellarmino, and then consider the anti-Lutheran aspect of heterodox thinkers like Siculo, Steuco and Zorzi, we can easily deduce that one of their common features is opposing Reformed theology.

At the same time, it could also be stressed that many (although not all) of the authors listed by Pucci are figures who cannot be slotted into any of the main historiographical categories, men like him whose doctrinal positions were far removed from the dominant orthodoxies.<sup>7</sup> However, perhaps the most important common trait is the fact that—apart from Pigghe—they were all subjected to different forms of persecution by the religious authorities during their lives. Savonarola and Siculo were tried by the Inquisition and sentenced to death (the former in 1498 in Florence and the latter in 1551 in Ferrara),<sup>8</sup> while the Archbishop of Toledo, Bartolomé Carranza, was the victim of prosecution on two fronts, targeted by both the Roman and Spanish Inquisitions in one of the most sensational jurisdictional conflicts of the entire sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Persecuted because of their resistance to “papal tyranny”, Savonarola, Siculo, and Carranza rose to the role of martyrs of the “freedom of the Church and of the Council” in Francesco Pucci’s pantheon.<sup>10</sup> A contrasting type of religious martyr was the Jesuit Campion, who was condemned to death in England

6 For this long list drafted by Pucci himself, cf. Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 72. On his relationship with cardinal Bellarmine see *infra*, ch. iv.

7 Suffice it to mention Zorzi, Siculo or Catharinus. To underline Ambrosius Catharinus Politi’s original features see G. Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell’eresia. Ambrogio Catarino Politi 1484–1553* (Florence, Olschki, 2007).

8 See, respectively R. Klein, *Il processo di Girolamo Savonarola*, preface by A. Prosperi (Ferrara, Corbo, 1998; first Italian edition 1960) and *I processi di Girolamo Savonarola* (1498), ed. by I.G. Rao, P. Viti, R.M. Zaccaria (Florence, Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001); and A. Prosperi, *L’eresia del Libro grande. Storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta* (Milan, Feltrinelli, 2000).

9 On Carranza, see the important works published by J.I. Tellechea Idigoras.

10 Pucci quoted together those three names in a paragraph in which he underlined the conciliarist doctrines they shared: “Obturatum est os, vel muneribus vel minis, singulis fere spiritualibus concionatoribus et theologis, qui a tyrannide abhorrebant et Ecclesiae ac concilii libertatem asserebant, et nonnulli, sui sancti propositi tenaces, circumventi et e medio sublati sunt, quorum sanguis habebit Dominum vindicem in proximo Dei iudicio”

in 1581, the victim of anti-Catholic intolerance in Anglican territory in an act of violence that left a lasting mark on Pucci and many others.<sup>11</sup> Those on Pucci's list who did not suffer a violent death or experience the harshness of Inquisition prisons underwent a form of repression that was less brutal but nonetheless invasive: the censorship of ideas *sub specie librorum*. Francesco Zorzi's *De harmonia mundi* and *In Scripturam Sacram problemata* were included in the Parma Index in 1580 and later featured among the works suspended *donec expurgantur* in the Clementine Index of 1596.<sup>12</sup> The same clause of this Index also banned *Cosmopoeia* by the Canon Regular of the Lateran Agostino Steuco, whose main work, *De perenni philosophia*, only evaded the censors thanks to a shrewd act of self-censorship removing all traces of the much-feared Neoplatonic tradition.<sup>13</sup> Geronimo Osorio also featured in the 1590 Index (which was never promulgated) with his *De iustitia libri decem*. Even the three authoritative churchmen cited by Pucci (Ambrogio Catarino Politi, Cardinal de Vio and Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino), who were among the most highly esteemed representatives of Roman orthodoxy, suffered the shame of being included in the Index. After being the target of repeated accusations of heresy during the first phase of the Council of Trent, Politi was included in the 1596 Index as the author of *Questiones duae de verbis quibus Christus eucharistiae sacramentum confecit*, de Vio's well-known *Commentary on the Secunda secundae* by Thomas Aquinas was scrupulously examined in the 1570s by the Congregation of the Holy Office and Bellarmino's *Controversiae* was included

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(A.E. Baldini, "Tre inediti di Francesco Pucci al cardinal nepote e a Gregorio XIV alla vigilia del suo 'rientro' a Roma," *Rinascimento* 39 (1999), 157–223; 217–218.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. III.

<sup>12</sup> See C. Vasoli, "Intorno a Francesco Giorgio Veneto e all' 'armonia del mondo,'" in *idem Profetia e ragione. Studi sulla cultura del Cinque e del Seicento* (Naples, Morano editore, 1974), 291–292, who underlines those paragraphe censored in the expurgatory Index by Brisighella in 1606; and see, more recently, *idem*, "Nuovi documenti sulla condanna all'indice e la censura delle opere di Francesco Giorgio Veneto," in *Censura ecclesiastica e cultura politica in Italia tra Cinque e Seicento*, ed. by C. Stango, (Florence, Olschki, 2001) 55–78. On this aspect, see also Rotondò, "Cultura umanistica e difficoltà dei censori. Censura ecclesiastica e discussioni cinquecentesche sul platonismo," in *Le pouvoir et la plume. Incitation, contrôle et répression dans l'Italie du xvi<sup>e</sup> siècle. Actes du Colloque international organisé par le Centre Interuniversitaire de Recherche sur la Renaissance italienne et l'Institut Culturel Italien de Marseille, Aix-en-Provence, Marseille, 14–16 mai 1981 (Paris, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1982)*, 14–50.

<sup>13</sup> Vasoli, "Intorno a Francesco Giorgio Veneto".

in the 1590 Index on the express order of Sixtus V.<sup>14</sup> There can be no doubt that persecution was a decisive factor for Pucci in terms of empathy and identification. Many years later, he bore testament to this in a letter sent to a friend in Prague from Nuremberg in November 1592, when he did not hesitate to compare his own experience with the tormented lives of two leading Christian figures, Savonarola and Pico della Mirandola:

Having been falsely accused of heresy by certain rash and carnal figures inflated by the vacuous wind of worldly language and devoid of Christian charity, they felt it was necessary to react and show their adversaries' iniquity, as it was utterly intolerable that they should be reputed heretics, that is to say enemies of the republic of God which is Christianity.<sup>15</sup>

The emphatic language used by Pucci in his account of the rebellious ways in which Savonarola and Pico della Mirandola reacted against accusations of heresy clearly reflects all his resentment built up over the years regarding what he saw as profoundly unjust persecution; he felt that he was the guardian of certain truths that were reserved for a chosen few, but above all he saw himself as an honourable member of the “republic of God which is Christianity” and was unable to accept the weight of the accusations of heresy against him. Pucci’s explicit reference to these influential, although controversial, representatives of the Holy Roman Church—men who, like him, had been subjected to some form of censorship—was his way of claiming full rightful membership of the *Ecclesia catholica universalis*.

However, we should not overemphasize the common traits in Pucci’s heterogeneous group. This is partly because there is no sure evidence that he ever perceived them as a broadly homogeneous unit and partly because he encountered them at very different times of his life. Above all, though, it is because each of them influenced Pucci’s thinking through his works in a different way. For example, Savonarola—the most significant name on the list—played a

<sup>14</sup> Cf. respectively Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell’eresia*, 298; C. Arnold, *Die römische Zensur der Werke Cajetans und Contarinis (1558–1601). Grenzen der theologischen Konfessionalisierung* (Paderborn, F. Schöningh, 2008); and P. Godman, *The Saint as Censor. Robert Bellarmine between Inquisition and Index*, (Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2000), 100 ff.

<sup>15</sup> “Essendo accusati a torto di eresia da persone carnali e temerarie gonfiate dal vano vento della mondana grammatica e vote di cristiana carità, giudicarono d’esser tenuti a rispondere e a mostrar la iniquità de’ loro avversari, essendo troppo intolerabile l’esser tenuto eretico, cioè nemico della repubblica di Dio ch’è il cristianesimo”; Firpo, *Scritti*, p. 139; P. Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia nel Cinquecento. Nuovi documenti sul processo e la condanna di Francesco Pucci 1592–1597* (Padua, Cedam, 1999), 63.

decisive role in the development of his political ideas and theological doctrines. Although we have no autobiographical reference apart from general allusions to the Savonarolan faith of his family and some vague references to his youthful reading, it is easy to perceive how Savonarola's anti-Roman invective may have fuelled his unwavering and passionate desire for Church reform. More generally, it is clear that Savonarola's reflections on the concept of tyranny, the republican experiment conducted in Florence at the end of the fifteenth-century and the memory of this experience—which Pucci shared with the community of Florentine exiles in Lyons—increased the republican inspiration that runs throughout his work, in particular the utopian project *Forma d'una repubblica catholica* (1581), which never progressed beyond the manuscript stage.<sup>16</sup> Savonarola's teachings also influenced Pucci's theological development. While works like *Trionfo della croce* (*Triumph of the cross*) made a profound contribution to the Christocentric nature of his thinking<sup>17</sup> and Savonarola's original doctrine on the destiny of unbaptized children (later developed more consistently and systematically in Ambrogio Catarino Politi's works) influenced his theological reflections, more generally speaking, the prophetic scale of Savonarola's thought provided an ideal and fruitful legacy. It was probably also thanks to these readings which sated his thirst for divine matters “from childhood” that he convinced himself that he was a guardian of divine truths which were inaccessible to the majority of people, a man who was directly inspired by God. This led him to wait for Jews and pagans to convert and to announce the imminent coming of Christ on earth so that there could be a large Consistory for the renewal of all Christendom, just as other authors such as Francesco da Meleto had done at the beginning of the century.<sup>18</sup> The following elements were all taken from Savonarola's prophetic theology and

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. III.

<sup>17</sup> For the *Trionfo della croce*, cf. G. Savonarola, *Triumphus crucis de veritate fidei. Libro della verità della fede cristiana sopra el glorioso trionfo della croce di Cristo*, ed. by M. Ferrara (Rome, Belardetti, 1961).

<sup>18</sup> On Francesco da Meleto, see S. Bongi, “Francesco da Meleto un profeta fiorentino a' tempi del Machiavello,” *Archivio storico italiano*, s. 5, 3 (1889), 62–70; E. Garin, “Paolo Orlandini e il profeta Francesco da Meleto,” in idem, *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano* (Florence, Sansoni, 1961), 213–223; C. Vasoli, “La profezia di Francesco da Meleto,” in *Umanesimo e ermeneutica* (Padua, Cedam, 1963) 27–80; idem, “L'attesa della nuova era in ambienti e gruppi fiorentini del quattrocento,” in *L'attesa dell'età nuova nella spiritualità della fine del medioevo*, Convegni del centro di studi sulla spiritualità medievale, 3 (Todi, Accademia Tudertina, 1962), 370–432: 411–425 and 429–431; D. Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence. Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970), 376–379, 388–391; S. Dall'Aglio, “L'altra faccia dello pseudoprofeta. Francesco

made a profound impression on Pucci's thought and conduct over subsequent years: his focus on the topic of revelation and the light provided by God "ad servos suos prophetas", the wait for all men to convert to the true Christian faith, the certainty and self-confidence he displayed as a tangible sign of the reliability of his message, the reference to Thomas Aquinas's *Secunda secundae*, the latter's definition of prophecy as the act of knowledge of things that were far beyond the human capacity for learning and his insistence on the need to divulge them "ad aedificationem aliorum".<sup>19</sup>

Girolamo Savonarola had been a visionary reformer who was convinced that he was the enlightened bearer of a truth that surpassed all human understanding. He dedicated much of his preaching to denouncing corruption in the Church of Rome and prefiguring a not-too-distant time when the kingdom of Christ would be created on earth, wiping out the wickedness of Rome. The Church was so corrupt, the governors were so despotic and men were so indifferent to the needs of the life of the spirit that he felt divine intervention was needed to threaten humankind with the sword of tribulation and force people to do penance. The divine sword was supposed to be brandished by the human hand of Charles VIII. The main source of inspiration for Savonarola's prophetic vision was the Scriptures, especially the Book of Revelation, but his interpretation received fresh input from contemporary events: the invasion by the French, the uprising in Florence, the reconciliation between Florence and its old ally and the beginnings of a Republican civic system in which he was a prominent figure. The King of France (subsequently replaced in Savonarola's prophecy by the city of Florence) assumed a messianic role in his vision: God had elected him to be his minister and he was expected to convert infidels to Christianity and see through the renewal of the Church. It was therefore a millenarian vision that placed the age of the regeneration of humanity before the second coming of Christ and the final judgement, putting increasing trust in human institutions such as the French monarchy (or subsequently the Florentine Republic) to initiate the new order inspired by divine intervention. Although he envisaged the end of Roman primacy, Savonarola tried to safeguard the orthodoxy of his vision by distinguishing between the Roman hierarchy and the Catholic Church. He frequently reiterated his obedience and loyalty to papal authority, but at the same time explicitly stated that he only

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da Meleto scrivano della ss. Annunziata di Firenze," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 67 (2005), 343–351.

<sup>19</sup> See the important article by G.C. Garfagnini, "Savonarola e la profezia: tra mito e storia," "Studi medievali", s. 3, 29 (1988), 173–201, now also published in idem, "Questa è la terra tua". *Savonarola e Firenze* (Florence, Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2000), 29–55.

felt bound by this obligation if the Church of Rome continued to be consistent with the Catholic Church. The institution that he called the Catholic Church was not the hierarchical Church or an invisible community of elect individuals, but a visible community of saints with grace granted by God so that they could 'live well' ('vivan bene') and have a good rule of life.<sup>20</sup> It is fairly simple to find some of the main characteristics of Francesco Pucci's millenarianism in these features of Savonarola's millenarian prophecy: his belief that he was an enlightened messenger of God, the bearer of a message of radical renewal of the Church; his prophecy of the imminent conversion of Jews and Muslims to Christianity in view of the upcoming advent of the kingdom of Christ on earth; his search for both a politician and an institution that could guarantee his reform project—as we will see, Pucci also identified the institution in question as the French monarchy in the form of Henry IV; his concern to distinguish between men of the Church and individual popes—often the object of his condemnation—, on one hand, and the idea of a universal Catholic Church that would be able to embody the dream of renewal that he made himself the bearer of, on the other hand. Even the burden of hopes and expectations that Pucci heaped on Pope Clement VIII (1592–1605)—the Florentine pope who was a member of the Savonarolan Aldobrandini family—echoed another characteristic feature of Girolamo Savonarola's prophetic vision: his constant references to the coming of a 'saintly and good Pope' ('Papa santo e buono'), a 'supreme priest' ('sommo sacerdote'), a 'new pontiff' ('pontefice nuovo'), a prediction that had been inspired in turn by Joachim of Fiore's prophecy about the coming of an angelic pope.

Moreover, as testified by Pucci's aforementioned letter to Pope Clement VIII, the link between the Florentine exile and Savonarola soon became more than a debt regarding a single doctrine or work and turned into personal identification with overlapping destinies.

The other figure that Pucci identified with in his idealistic late sixteenth-century letter was the great fifteenth-century humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who was persecuted for his doctrines and finally cleared of all charges a year before his death, in June 1493, by order of Alexander VI. His name unequivocally recalls the Florentine Platonic tradition, which also played a significant role in Pucci's development.<sup>21</sup> While, as we shall see, the reading

<sup>20</sup> An essential work for these features of Savonarola's prophecy is still D. Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence*, ch. v and x. By Weinstein, see now also *Savonarola. Rise and Fall of a Renaissance Prophet* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> On Florentine Neoplatonism, in addition to the well known works by Eugenio Garin, see J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Leiden-New York, Brill, 1991),

of Pico's works and, more generally, the hermetic Platonic texts was probably encouraged by Eufrosino Lapini, his first true master of literary studies,<sup>22</sup> it is not impossible that Pucci had direct access to one or more of the numerous editions of Pico's works that were popular in Florence at the time even before he became a member of the Academy founded by Lapini.<sup>23</sup> It is easy to stress that the topic of the liberty and dignity of man played a central role throughout Pucci's thinking. The characteristic features of the considerations by Ficino and Pico on the religious and Christian value of moral life, and questions about the salvation of virtuous and noble-minded pagans were reworked by many Italian heretics engaged in the anti-Protestant religious controversy—in later centuries they contributed to the concept of natural religion of which Pucci can be considered a forerunner.<sup>24</sup> Neoplatonic motifs seem to run throughout his works, ranging from the emphasis placed on the centrality of free will and the affirmation of a natural faith to his insistence on the prospects of salvation reserved for pagans or the peoples of the New World who still enjoyed natural primordial innocence.<sup>25</sup> In some cases, although there is no precise documentary evidence, we can attempt to identify what else Pucci owed to single works or authors. For example, it was in the pages of *Discorso sulla dignità dell'uomo*, Giovanni Pico's most celebrated work, that, alongside a passionate exaltation of the centrality of free will,<sup>26</sup> Pucci possibly first encountered an explicit

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partially translated in Italian with the title *La riscoperta di Platone nel Rinascimento* (Pisa, Edizioni della Scuola Normale, 2009) and idem, *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *infra*.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. L. Quaquarelli, Z. Zanardi, *Pichiana. Bibliografia delle edizioni e degli studi* (Florence, Olschki, 2005), esp. nn. 57–61 for the Florentine editions of Pico's *Sette sposizioni* (*l'Heptaplus*), published in the second half of the 1550s.

<sup>24</sup> D. Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento e altri scritti*, ed. by A. Prosperi (Turin, Einaudi, 1992; first edition, 1939), 18. See, for example, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century controversialist writings which pointed out Pucci as the founder of naturalism; cf. M. Biagioni, "Prospettive di ricerca su Francesco Pucci," *Rivista storica italiana*, 107 (1995), 133–152: 151–152.

<sup>25</sup> On this aspect see also *infra*, ch. iv.

<sup>26</sup> "Taking man, therefore, this creature of indeterminate image, He [God] set him in the middle of the world and thus spoke to him: 'We have given you, Oh Adam; no visage proper to yourself, nor any endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgment and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature'; Giovanni Pico della

reference to the mother's womb as a place where (or a moment when) man sees his extraordinary potential recognized, even before birth: "Oh supreme generosity of God the Father," Pico wrote, "Oh supreme and admirable happiness of man who may have whatever he desires, and be whatever he may wish! Brutish men bring with them from their mother's womb everything they will ever have."<sup>27</sup> Pucci later made this idea his own. He wrote on several occasions that nature's revolution had made all men good and that in order to share in the universal redemption of man it was necessary to have only a general belief in God, one that was contemplative rather than active, as he specified in the best Platonic tradition.<sup>28</sup> All men, whenever and wherever they lived now or had lived before, participated effectively in the benefit of Christ "in ipso matri utero", that is, "in our mother's womb, when thanks to the Creator we are given a soul in the image of God."<sup>29</sup>

The Platonic idea of natural faith and universal redemption was intertwined with a delicate theological matter that divided the religious authorities of the day—the original sin. Pucci found an interpretation that suited the original theological vision he was formulating in certain profoundly anti-Lutheran writers like Catarino and Pigghe. In *De peccato originali* (1541), which was republished in 1542 as part of the *Opuscula* published in Lyons, Catarino argued that man's essential qualities had not been damaged by Adam's sin, nor had human nature been corrupted, as Lutheran thinking maintained. Man had only been deprived of what God had freely added to our natural state, namely the gift of integrity which, though not an essential part of human nature, was nonetheless necessary to enable human nature to become perfect and whole. This reasoning led Politi to categorically reject the idea that unbaptized infants were damned.<sup>30</sup> In defiance of decrees recently approved at Trent, Catarino embraced the controversial idea of limbo, an intermediate place where unbaptized infants remained to await final redemption. Pucci adopted this concept in the final years of his life, adding his name to the 'heterodox' Dominican

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Mirandola, *Oration on the dignity of man*, translated by A. Robert Caponigri; introd. by Russell Kirk (Chicago, Gateway Editions; distributed by Regnery Co., 1956), 6–7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Cantimori, *Eretici*, p. 364.

<sup>29</sup> "Nel ventre materno, quando per beneficio del creatore semo forniti d'anima all'immagine di Dio"; letter to Niccolò Balbani, Basel, autumn 1578, in *Per la storia degli eretici italiani del secolo xvi in Europa*, testi raccolti da D. Cantimori e E. Feist (Rome, Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1937), 114; see also Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 23–54, and Cantimori, *Eretici*, 362. For Giorgio Siculo's similar reflections, see *ibid.*, 364.

<sup>30</sup> See Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell'eresia*.

tradition from Antonino Pierozzi to Catarino, by way of Savonarola and de Vio, who he also cited, as we have seen, among the influences on his thinking.<sup>31</sup> Albert Pigghe had also claimed in similar terms that the original sin was simply the attribution of Adam's sin to every child at birth, which led him to reject the idea that infants bore any inherent trait of sinfulness.<sup>32</sup> Pucci developed the doctrine of Adam's perfect state "*ante lapsus*" ("before the fall") —the doctrine of the natural and primordial perfection of man—on the basis of Catarino and Pigghe's writings, taking some of their arguments to extreme consequences and combining these arguments with Platonic elements that were totally extraneous to their tradition,<sup>33</sup> thereby forcing an interpretation upon them, but always taking inspiration from them. He defended this doctrine at great length against attacks by Fausto Sozzini and others who believed that, on the contrary, the natural state of man was mortal and that he could only achieve immortality through active faith in the Christian doctrine.<sup>34</sup>

Pucci did not therefore scrupulously follow the authors he encountered along the way; he drew very freely on different positions and theories in order to develop an original synthesis, even though it was not always coherent. Just as he later learned "to examine freely, one by one, the particular sentences which have been and still are controversial, with the intention of drawing conclusions [...] in which [...] he found and felt the properties and marks of divine truth,"<sup>35</sup> he absorbed equally freely any doctrine taken from any work,

31 Cf. *infra*, ch. iv.

32 On Albert Pigge (Pighius) it suffices to refer to the bibliography cited in the recent entry by R. Bäumer in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Reformation*, 4 vols. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), 3, 271.

33 To this end, see Rotondò's reflections about the influence exercised by the Oxonian Platonic environment and by Antonio del Corro's teaching on Pucci's doctrine about original sin: Rotondò, "Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra e i primi scritti teologici di Francesco Pucci," in idem, *Studi e ricerche di storia eretica* (Turin, Giappichelli, 1974), 225–271: 260 ff, now republished in idem, *Studi di storia eretica del Cinquecento*, 2 vols. (Florence, Olschki, 2008), 2, 577–615.

34 Outside Christian doctrine there was no chance of salvation, Sozzini argued, because no natural religion existed. On Pucci's dispute with Sozzini see now M. Biagioli, "La ragione dell'immortalità: la disputa tra Francesco Pucci e Fausto Sozzini *De statu primi hominis ante lapsus*," in *Faustus Socinus and his Heritage*, ed. by Lech Szczucki (Cracow, 2005), 53–89.

35 "Esaminare liberamente, ad una ad una, le sentenze particolari che sono state e sono in controversia, con [il] proposito di fermar[s]i nelle conclusioni in cui [...] trovass[e] e sentiss[e] le proprietà e le marche della verità divina"; letter to Pope Clement VIII, 143.

following the sole criterion that inspired him on an ongoing basis—his search for “divine truth”.<sup>36</sup>

Recent studies have confirmed the connection between Neoplatonism and religious Latitudinarianism, focusing on the universalistic outcomes of some sectors of Neoplatonic Renaissance philosophy. To understand how such texts may have influenced the Latitudinarian evolution of Pucci’s thinking, one merely has to reread some passages of Marsilio Ficino’s *Teologia platonica*, where he defines religion as “the instinct which is common and natural to all peoples, which we use constantly and everywhere in order to meditate on Providence and venerate it as the queen of the world”, stressing the fact that “worship of the divine is a natural instinct for man, as natural as neighing is to horses or barking to dogs.” It is likely that passages of this kind confirmed Pucci’s conviction that the divine dimension was naturally perceivable by all men and that salvation was therefore within everyone’s reach.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, it is hard to deny the profound influence that authors such as Francesco Zorzi and Agostino Steuco had on the development of Pucci’s thinking. A staunch defender of Catholic unity, Steuco was the author of

36 Catharinus, for example, had argued in favour of a divine grace universally given to humankind, but had also affirmed that man would need a second grace to reach salvation, a grace that he could obtain only with the help of his own good works (Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell’eresia*). Pucci moved beyond this. His main theological idea was that all men were destined to salvation because they were enlightened by a natural faith in God, sufficient *per se* to reach the kingdom of heaven. Humankind, according to Pucci, was created good by nature: natural revelation was enough to give each man his faith in God, and this natural faith was sufficient to reach salvation.

37 Cf. the important article by J. Hankins, “Religion and the Modernity of Renaissance Humanism,” in A. Mazzocco, ed., *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism* (Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2006), 137–153, in which the author writes that “had there been fewer constraints on freedom of religious expression, it is possible, even likely, that the Platonists’ tendency to conflate salvation and contemplative union with God would have led to a more robust affirmation of the possibility of salvation outside the Church” (*ibid.*, 147; quotation in my text is taken from p. 148). On some of these aspects, see also J. Lauster, *Marsilio Ficino as a Christian Thinker. Theological Aspects of His Platonism*, in *Marsilio Ficino. His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, ed. by M.J.B. Allen and V. Rees, with M. Davies (Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill, 2002), 45–69: 51. Hypotheses regarding the possible influence of Ficinian ideas on Pucci’s thought could be various. Pucci’s idea according to which only those men who turned against divine will would be damned, for example, most likely was influenced by the reading of Ficino, such passages as the one in which he reminded that “[God] from his high throne strikes with lightning those who turn against him due to ingratitude, wickedness and arrogance;” M. Ficino, *La religione cristiana*, ed. by R. Zanzarri (Rome, Città Nuova, 2005), 38; my translation.

*De perenni philosophia*, a work in which he demonstrated the unifying efficacy of an ancient philosophical and religious tradition—precisely defined as “perennial philosophy”—that united peoples of different races and habits in a single faith. Pucci and Steuco shared a belief in the importance of defending the unity of the *Ecclesia catholica* at a distance of a few decades.<sup>38</sup> The connection between Neoplatonism and Latitudinarianism was even clearer in the works of the Franciscan Francesco Zorzi. The *De harmonia mundi*, a treatise with strong Neoplatonic overtones first published in 1525, had spread the belief in the salvation of the greatest number of believers and the prospect of the final conversion of all humankind.<sup>39</sup> It is no coincidence that Zorzi’s work inspired Celio Secondo Curione to write a treatise that lauded the amplitude of divine mercy even in its title—*De amplitudine regni Dei*.<sup>40</sup> Pucci probably came across this work in Basle during his long stay with Curione’s son in the late 1570s.<sup>41</sup> Authors like Curione, Zorzi and Steuco (he probably encountered the last two in the lectures given by Cosimo Bartoli in Florence)<sup>42</sup> helped Pucci to understand the extraordinary revolutionary drive of the combination of the

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38 Steuco was of course writing in a very different historical context from that of Puccis; more precisely, he was writing in those years preceding the failure of Ratisbon (Regensburg) Conference in 1541. On this former prefect of the Vatican Library, author of many polemical works against Platonic theology and cabalistic superstitions, and later a supporter of one eternal truth and wisdom, see, among others, M. Mucillo, “La ‘prisca theologia’ nel *De perenni philosophia* di Agostino Steuco da Gubbio,” in eadem *Platonismo ermetismo e “Prisca theologia”. Ricerche di storiografia filosofica rinascimentale* (Florence, Olschki, 1996), 1–72.

39 On the deep influence exercised by the *De harmonia mundi* and the *Problemata* on late sixteenth-century philosophical and religious culture, cf. Vasoli, *Profezia e ragione*, 136, who underlines, *inter alia*, Zorzi’s influence on John Dee, personally well known to Francesco Pucci (cf. *infra*, ch. II and III).

40 L. D’Ascia, “Tra platonismo e riforma: Curione, Zwingli e Francesco Zorzi,” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance*, 61 (1999), 673–699: 695.

41 It is Leone Curione, as we can easily gather from the report written by the dean and by the regents of the University of Basel in July 1578; cf. Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 145.

42 In his comment on *canto* xxiv from Dante’s *Paradise*, for example, Bartoli had largely analysed, following a clear Platonic and hermetic point of view, the issue of faith and of its presence as occult and initiatory *prisca theologia* in all ages and among people of the whole world, quoting authors such as Zorzi and Steuco. It was a public lesson held on December 17th, 1542, afterwards inserted by Anton Francesco Doni in an anthology composed of *Lettioni d’accademici fiorentini sopra Dante*, dedicated to Bartolomeo Panciatichi, published in June 1547. Two decades later, when Bartoli decided to insert this work in his *Ragionamenti accademici sopra alcuni luoghi difficili di Dante*, published in Venice in 1567, he considered it appropriate to erase those Neoplatonic references; M. Firpo, *Gli affreschi*

Platonic idea of man's natural predisposition to faith with the universalistic ideals that he was nurturing. However, it would once again be rather ingenuous if we attempted to anchor Francesco Pucci's thinking to any tradition or well-defined current of thought; his reasoning was the result of a totally independent and original mental process. This is also shown by Pucci's long-distance dialogue with Giorgio Siculo—a singular Benedictine monk who had little in common with the Florentine Neoplatonic tradition—about the universal salvation of humankind. Like Steuco's *De perenni philosophia* and Zorzi's writings, Siculo's most important printed work, *Epistola alli cittadini della riva di Trento* (1550), was part of a climate still characterised by conciliar hopes and the desire for religious unity. Pucci only knew the work indirectly through Calvin's rebuttal of it in *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione* (1551).<sup>43</sup> He was immediately drawn to Siculo while reading the French reformer's work, seeing him as an inspired predecessor.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, in order to understand what Pucci might have made of Siculo's doctrines, we need to go back to Calvin's work (even before Chapter xxx of Pucci's main work against Calvin, *De praedestinatione*, in which he converses more with Calvin the confuter of Siculo than with Siculo himself). Pucci was immediately struck by Calvin's concise presentation of Siculo. This "homo indoctus"<sup>45</sup>—who, following Christ's appearance, had discovered the most profound meaning of the Holy Scriptures, becoming so familiar with "de rebus divinis" that with the support of his fellow monk Luciano degli Ottoni

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*di Pontormo*, 180–182; see also D. Dalmas, *Dante nella crisi religiosa del Cinquecento italiano da Trifon Gabriele a Lodovico Castelvetro* (Manziana, Vecchiarelli, 2005), 60–61.

43 This hypothesis, proposed by Delio Cantimori many years ago (*Eretici*, 378), has been recently confirmed by Biagioli, "Introduzione," in Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, 30, and footnote 403 p. 247; and by A. Dufour, "Réponse a M. Biagioli," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 65 (2003), p. 524. Most likely, Pucci read Calvin's work only many years after its first edition, during his stay in Prague in the second half of the 1580s: indirect evidence of this hypothesis is that Siculo's name was never quoted by Pucci before the drafting of the *De praedestinatione* in Prague in the years 1588–89. There is no edition of Calvin's *De aeterna praedestinatione Dei* following the French one published in Geneva in 1566; cf. J. Calvin, *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione. De la prédestination éternelle*, ed. by W.H. Neuser, *Texte français établi par O. Fatio* (Geneva, Droz, 1998), XXIX, but it is easy to speculate that the book had a renewed circulation during the harsh controversy concerning the issue of predestination that, immediately after *Colloquies* (1586), set Théodore de Bèze against the exponents of some of the most important Lutheran Churches. It is highly probable that Pucci received fresh news about those debates during his stay in Prague. On these polemics and Pucci's involvement, see *infra*, ch. vi.

44 See Cantimori, *Eretici*, 378; Biagioli, "Introduzione," 30–31. On the relationship between Pucci and Siculo, see also Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro grande*, 365 ff.

45 "Literarum imperitissimus" in his *De praedestinatione* (cf. Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, 246).

was able to amass great credit among the “imperitos”<sup>46</sup>—appealed above all to his spirit of a *theodidactus*, a self-taught man directly inspired by God.<sup>47</sup> As he leafed through Calvin’s attack on Siculo, even before attempting to refute it, Pucci discovered that someone before him had affirmed that “all the faithful in the New Testament were chosen for salvation”,<sup>48</sup> that “St Paul [...] performs God’s justice, which comes from a faith that is common to all and sets no distinctions,”<sup>49</sup> and that “as Christ brings forgiveness for all the sins of this world we would have to expel all reprobates from this world if we desired to deny them God’s grace,”<sup>50</sup> or in short that “every man may derive from his own sense of God” a “natural faith” that leads him to salvation.<sup>51</sup> From that moment on, although they had never met, Pucci’s thoughts often focused on Siculo and he took up the same battle fought by him; writing the *De praedestinatione Dei* (1589–90) was probably his way of redeeming the sad fate that destiny had reserved for the Benedictine monk.

If Pucci had been able to read Siculo’s *Epistola* directly and in full, he would have discovered that their affinities were not limited to these aspects and that the central message of the work (not mentioned in Calvin’s text)—the entitlement to feign observance of Catholic ceremonies while awaiting the imminent regeneration of Christianity—coincided with a belief that he had shared for at least a few years, albeit in quite a different context. The context in question was Queen Elizabeth’s England in the late 1570s and early 1580s, a period when Pucci felt cornered by the surrounding hostility and consequently theorized

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46 Calvin, *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione*, pp. 12 e 14. Re-elaborating this informations in his *De praedestinatione* Pucci added that Luciano degli Ottoni (*eius abbas*) had introduced Siculo to cardinal Pole and to the bishops in Trent, where the monk’s doctrines had been listened “magno concursu et approbatione auditorum ac totius Italiae” (Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, 246). These little additions let us suppose that Pucci had gathered some extra information on behalf of the Sicilian monk, probably before reading Calvin’s text on predestination. On the close friendship between Degli Ottoni and Siculo, in addition to Prosperi, *L’eresia del Libro grande*, see also G. Fragnito, “Ercole Gonzaga, Reginald Pole e il monastero di San Benedetto Polirone. Nuovi documenti su Luciano degli Ottoni e Benedetto Fontanini (1549–1551),” *Benedictina*, 34 (1987), 253–271, and eadem, “Luciano degli Ottoni,” in DBI, 36, 169–173.

47 See, among other possible examples, the self-definition given by Pucci himself in the letter written from Dieppe in 1592 and here published in the appendix, *infra*.

48 Calvin, *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione*, 189.

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*, 197.

51 *Ibid.*, 195.

and practised Nicodemism as a way of life.<sup>52</sup> Pucci saw himself as having been persecuted for much of his life, a destiny which bound him closely to Edmund Campion, one of the best-known Jesuit missionaries in England. Opposed by the English throne, which showed little tolerance towards the Jesuits, Campion had made Nicodemism a way of thinking and a daily practice.<sup>53</sup> Many years later, Pucci provided (indirect) evidence of their bond by quoting from one of Campion's major works, *Rationes decem*, although it had nothing to do with Nicodemite behaviour:

Although the Jesuits controlling our schools are mostly against us, there are some among them, whose influence far exceeds that of all the others, who agree with us. Indeed, we see that Edmund Campion recognized that "second death, the death of the soul, the death of grace is associated with sin alone and downright blasphemy". Here he showed that he thinks like us and disagrees with the masses of scholastics, when he was ready to authenticate his doctrine with blood.<sup>54</sup>

This quotation was used by Pucci in his work *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* (1592) to give strength and substance to a strongly held belief that loss of faith and eternal damnation were exclusively reserved to those who voluntarily and consciously (after reaching the age of reason) resisted God's will and acted against it. Those deprived of the Holy Sacraments (such as unbaptized infants that died) or remained ignorant of the word of God (like New World natives)

52 Cf. *infra*, ch. III.

53 On Catholic Nicodemism in England and the Jesuits' role, see now S. Tutino, "Between Nicodemism and 'Honest' Dissimulation: the Society of Jesus in England," *Historical Research*, 79 (2006), 534–553.

54 "Sebbene i gesuiti che regnano nelle scuole per lo più ci avversino, tuttavia non mancarono alcuni tra loro, il cui peso supera il gran numero degli altri, i quali concordano con noi. Vediamo infatti che Edmondo Campion ha riconosciuto che 'la morte seconda, la morte dell'anima, la morte della grazia è associata al solo peccato e alla bestemmia esiziale'. In questo egli mostrò di pensare come noi e di dissentire dal volgo scolastico, allorquando si accingeva a sigillare con il sangue la sua dottrina;" Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, p. 72. Pucci's final evocation reveals how deeply the Jesuit's martyrdom had influenced him; we shall come back to this point later on (cf. *infra*). The work to which Pucci refers is the *ratio 8* (*De paradoxis haereticorum*) included in the *Rationes decem* published in 1581, on which see the analysis given by T.M. McCoog, "Playing the Champion: The Role of Disputation in the Jesuit Mission," in *The Reckoned Expense. Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits. Essays in celebration of the first centenary of Campion Hall, Oxford (1896–1996)*, ed. by T.M. McCoog (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press), 119–139: 131–135.

were not affected.<sup>55</sup> By referring to his old Jesuit friend, Pucci was seeking a safe base from which to claim full orthodoxy for an unorthodox expression. It was clear, however, that he was twisting Campion's words to suit his own interpretation, as the Jesuit had spoken of loss of grace and not loss of faith, writing that sin and blasphemy entailed a loss of grace and the death of the soul. Pucci's position instead seemed to reflect the heretical doctrines on the indivisibility of faith and charity preached by Juan Gil in Seville in the 1530s rather than Campion's words. Pucci had probably heard of Gil's doctrines from his London teacher Antonio del Corro, or possibly through an extraordinary document, *Artes aliquot*, one of the first martyrologies of Spanish heterodox thinkers, which Corro had been a major contributor to.<sup>56</sup> It was a doctrine that the Benedictines, above all Giorgio Siculo, as Pucci saw for himself,<sup>57</sup> helped to spread throughout Italy in the mid sixteenth-century.<sup>58</sup> However, the Council of Trent had clamped down on the distribution of this dangerous debate on sin and the death of the soul. The fifteenth article of the Decree on Justification established that mortal sin did not imply a loss of faith, but only a loss of grace (which is precisely what Campion maintained), while Luciano degli Ottoni, the abbot representing the Benedictine Congregation in Trent along with Isidoro Chiari and Crisostomo Calvini, was forced to back down.<sup>59</sup> Edmund Campion therefore took inspiration from the Tridentine decree by making clever use of the concept of the loss of grace in his *Rationes decem*. Francesco Pucci, on the other hand, attempted to hold together something that had not been tenable for more than two decades.

55 Cf, for example, Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 28.

56 For the *Artes aliquot*, see N. Castrillo Benito, *El "Reginaldo Montano". Primer Libro polemico contra la Inquisicion Espanola*, Prólogo de J. Pérez Villanueva, Madrid, CSIC, 1991. On the authorship of the work there are different interpretations. While Arthur Gordon Kinder and Bernard Antoon Vermaseren are convinced that Antonio del Corro is the author of the *Sanctae Inquisitionis Hispanicae artes*, Carlos Gilly affirms that Corro contributed to the work only through an exchange of informations with Casiodoro de Reina, the real author of the book according to his analysis; cf, lastly, the entry *Corro, Antonio* by Gilly himself, in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, 4 vols., ed. by A. Prosperi, with the collaboration of V. Lavenia and J. Tedeschi (Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, 2010).

57 See Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, 246.

58 Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro grande*.

59 S. Pastore, *Un'eresia spagnola. Spiritualità conversa, alumbrados e Inquisizione, 1449–1559* (Florence, Olschki, 2004), 216. Juan Gil's opinions embarrassed his ancient teacher Domingo de Soto who was directly involved in the tridentine debates. While in Trent, he first tried to find a compromise defending some of his doctrines but he finally had to condemn them publicly: Giorgio Siculo's complaints were of no help at all (*ibid.*, 208 ff.).

## 2 Florence, the “Benefit of Christ” and the Academy

In the preceding paragraph we were shown that if we let the scant autobiographical references to Pucci guide us through the maze of Italian humanistic and religious culture, we are presented with a vivid, although partial, overview of the mosaic of ideas and doctrines that he patiently composed in the course of his life. For now, though, we will return to the more concrete setting of the Medici's Florence in the late 1550s to examine the environments, books and cultural figures that he encountered in the first decade of his education. Pucci probably found the basis of his original theological vision in the treatise the *Benefit of Christ crucified*, published in Venice in 1543. Indeed, the focus on the “efficacy of the benefit of Christ in all men”<sup>60</sup> in many of his works as a corollary of the amplitude of the kingdom of God inevitably brings to mind this Italian Reformation bestseller, which was published anonymously but was undoubtedly written by the Benedictine Benedetto da Mantova and the scholar Marcantonio Flaminio.<sup>61</sup> These were two of the leading *Spirituali* in Italy, a group consisting of high-ranking figures in the Church hierarchy and educated laymen who supported some of the main demands of the Protestant Reformation and more or less explicitly supported a project of radical renewal of the ecclesiastical institutions and the doctrinal system of the Church of Rome without, however, allowing their thinking to be connected to Luther and Calvin in any way.<sup>62</sup> Three editions of the book were published in the mid-1540s and according to the former bishop of Capodistria Pier Paolo Vergerio, who had become an apostate in Switzerland, 40,000 copies were in circulation. The book nourished the faith and devotion of cardinals, bishops, cobblers and *mulierculae* alike and, partly because of its uncontrolled distribution, it was the target of a violent campaign of repression which led to it almost completely disappearing from circulation in a matter of decades (today very few copies remain). It was first condemned in 1546 and appeared in Dalla Casa's first Index of prohibited books in 1549.<sup>63</sup> Although we may speculate that

60 Letter to Pope Clement VIII, Salzburg, August 25 1593, in Pucci, Lettere, 1, p. 155; but see also Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, p. 10.

61 Bibliography on this text is very large. It suffices to mention the entry ‘Beneficio di Cristo’ in *The Italian Reformation*, pp. 923–931 and my more recent contribution: G. Caravale, ‘Il Beneficio di Cristo e l’Inquisizione romana: un caso di censure tardive’, in *Cinquant’anni di storiografia italiana sulla Riforma e i movimenti eretici in Italia 1950–2000*, ed. by S. Peyronel (Turin, Claudiana, 2002), 151–173.

62 Leafing through the *Beneficio*, Pucci could have read statements, partly inspired by Neoplatonic ideas, referring to the cosmic revolution of sin and redemption, together with assertions concerning the superiority (and perfection) of human nature before Adam's fall (cf. *Beneficio di Cristo*, 13–14 and 21).

63 S. Caponetto, “Nota critica,” in *Beneficio di Cristo*, 504–506.

Pucci was unable to find a copy of the book as a result of this extremely hostile censorship,<sup>64</sup> he probably read the faithful but disguised paraphrase by Benedetto Varchi in *Sermone fatto alla croce et recitato il venerdì santo nella compagnia di San Domenico l'anno 1549* (*Sermon to the Cross pronounced on Good Friday in the Company of St Dominic in the year 1549*). It was dated 19 April, published on the following day by Lorenzo Torrentino in an appendix to the funeral oration for Maria Salvati, read by Varchi himself in the Florentine Academy on 16 December 1543 and subsequently republished—closer to the time when Pucci started reading—first by Antonio Manuzio in Bologna in 1557 and then by Giolito in Venice in 1562–63.<sup>65</sup> In Varchi's sermon, Pucci was probably able to assimilate the main doctrines of the *Beneficio*, including the superiority of human nature over all other creatures before Adam's sin,<sup>66</sup> Christ's salvific sacrifice to redeem man from the state of corruption which Adam's sin had cast him into and the general pardon granted by God to all humankind.<sup>67</sup>

Pucci also continued to assimilate these ideas and doctrines through the allusive filter of the commentaries on Dante and Petrarch given every week at the Florentine Academy during the 1550s and 1560s. A meeting place for intellectuals, the Academy was invested with an official function in the Medici principality. It was created in the early 1540s—one of its most active members was the former Republican Benedetto Varchi—in order to “create a shining myth around Cosimo's name and a solid Tuscan identity”.<sup>68</sup> The main aim of this project was to spread knowledge in the vernacular and promote Tuscan as a language,<sup>69</sup> a plan that developed in pursuit of erudite commentaries on Dante and Petrarch. The lectures became even more formal when two permanent lectors were appointed after the 1553 reform. Chosen

64 Cf. also some interesting evidence concerning the late circulation of the *Beneficio* during the fifties and sixties of the sixteenth-century (and even beyond), in *ibid.*, 461 ff., and Caravale, “Il Beneficio di Cristo,” 170.

65 This last edition of the *Sermone* was published together with a work by Vittoria Colonna entitled *Pianto della Marchesa di Pescara sopra la Passione di Cristo*; on which see E.-M. Jung-Inglessis, “Il Pianto della Marchesa di Pescara sopra la passione di Christo [1957],” *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà*, 10 (1997), 115–204: 124–130; P. Simoncelli, *Evangelismo italiano del Cinquecento. Questione religiosa e nicodemismo politico* (Rome, Istituto per la storia moderna e contemporanea, 1979), 331 ff.; Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo*, 220 ff.

66 Varchi, *Sermone della croce*, 35–37; Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo*, 223.

67 *Ibid.*

68 Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo*, 167.

69 See the articles by Michel Plaisance now collected in a volume entitled *L'Accademia e il suo principe. Cultura e politica nella Firenze di Cosimo I e di Francesco de' Medici* (Manziana, Vecchiarelli, 2004); cf. also Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo*, 168 ff.

by the ducal secretary and given a regular stipend, Giovanbattista Gelli and Benedetto Varchi respectively focused on Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Petrarch's *Canzoniere*.<sup>70</sup> Pucci was probably thinking of these commentaries and texts with all their heterodox allusions,<sup>71</sup> as well as lectures on Petrarch and Dante by Pierfrancesco Giambullari and Cosimo Bartoli,<sup>72</sup> when he mentioned his passion for "Dante and Petrarch's spiritual works."<sup>73</sup> While Dante was a point of

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70 The Academy's consul too become a magistrate employed and payed by the prince; M. Plaisance, "L'Académie florentine de 1541 à 1583: permanence et changement," in *idem, L'Accademia e il suo principe*, 325–337: 327. On Gelli, in addition to the classic work by A.L. De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli and the Florentine Academy. The Rebellion against Latin* (Florence, Olschki, 1976), see now V. Perrone Compagni, "Cose di filosofia si possono dire in volgare. Il programma culturale di Giambattista Gelli," in *Il volgare come lingua di cultura dal Trecento al Cinquecento*, Atti del convegno internazionale, Mantova, 18–20 ottobre 2001, ed. by A. Calzona, F.P. Fiore, A. Tenenti, C. Vasoli (Florence, Olschki, 2003), 301–337. On Varchi, in addition to Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo*, see the important works by S. Lo Re, *La crisi della libertà fiorentina. Alle origini della formazione intellettuale di Benedetto Varchi e Piero Vettori* (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003), and, above all, *idem, Politica e cultura nella Firenze di Cosimo. Studi su Benedetto Varchi* (Manziana, Vecchiarelli, 2008).

71 In those Dante lessons held in the fifties Gelli, aware of a cultural climate that was rapidly changing, often added some orthodox statements in order to adapt his discourse to the first tridentine decrees. But it is noteworthy that in those texts there still remained a few expressions consistent with his past heterodox tendencies. In a lesson held in 1558, for example, Gelli, still affirmed that "we can find forgiveness for our sins only in the merits of Christ, Son of God, granted to us through faith;" Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo*, 189–190.

72 See lastly A. D'Alessandro, "Cultura e politica nell'Accademia fiorentina: nota alle lezioni su Dante di Pierfrancesco Giambullari," *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 16 (2002), 217–240. On Bartoli as Pucci's possible intermediary in acknowledging Zorzi's doctrine cf. *supra*.

73 The filter represented by these academic lessons did not prevent Pucci from consulting directly editions of Petrarch and Dante: see, as an example, the verses of Dante's *Paradise*, XXVII, 127–129 (*Che fede ed innocenza son reperte / solo ne' pargoletti; poi ciascuna / fugge pria che le guance sien coperte*) used by Pucci to strengthen his idea of the original innocence of human nature, corruptible only through the wicked habits acquired by men in their adult age (see his letter to Niccolò Balbani, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 41); or those verses taken from Dante's *Purgatory*, XVI, 103–105, quoted at the very beginning of his *Informatione* (*I due soli [...] che l'una e l'altra strada facean vedere*), used by Pucci to give strength to the idea according to which the juxtaposition between temporal and spiritual power was the main cause of the moral corruption of the ecclesiastical institutions; or, even more, see the two long letters sent in 1591 to pope Gregory XIV and to the cardinal nepew, in which Pucci quoted Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (CXXXVII, 12–13: *anime belle e di virtute amiche / terranno il mondo*), using those verses in a millenaristic tone (Baldini, "Tre inediti di Francesco Pucci," p. 176). More generally, on the use of Dante by sixteenth-century *spirituali* and reformers, see Dalmas, *Dante nella crisi religiosa*

reference for sixteenth-century Florentine culture that was frequently used as an opportunity or pretext for forays into the religious debate that were increasingly at the margins of orthodoxy,<sup>74</sup> Petrarch's writings introduced the more restless sixteenth-century Italian religious thinkers to a "religio of affections, inward and intimate, with little theological background and based on the withdrawal of faith *in interiore homine*".<sup>75</sup> There can be no doubt that Pucci was attracted by this poetic and religious message, in which he found a combination of Neoplatonic elements and demands for religious reform.<sup>76</sup>

The idea of Christ's universal benefit to all humanity and, above all, the concept of the amplitude of divine goodness were certainly present in Florence in the mid-1550s. They featured, for example, in an anonymous treatise about the *Greatness of God's Mercy* (*Grandezza delle misericordie del Signore*), which was simply the Italian translation of Erasmus of Rotterdam's *De immensa misericordia Dei* (1524).<sup>77</sup> This work, which praised the infinite mercy of God who "disposes eternal salvation for all,"<sup>78</sup> had first been translated in Mantua in 1542, then in Venice in 1551, and a third and last time in Florence in 1554 by a group of scholars that included Ludovico Domenichi, the Neoplatonic philosopher Pompeo della Barba and his brother Simone della Barba, all members of the Florentine Academy, which Pucci attended shortly thereafter.<sup>79</sup> Thanks to texts like this, faith in an infinitely merciful God, a universally valid benefit of Christ for all believers and universal predestination to grace for all men easily replaced the Lutheran doctrine of free justification and divine

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*italiana*. More specifically, for the Florentine context, see M.A. Watt, "The Reception of Dante in the Time of Cosimo I," in K. Eisenbacher, ed., *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2001), 121–134.

74 Dalmas, *Dante*, 38; but the whole chapter II of the volume is significant for the purposes of our discussion.

75 G. Fragnito, *In museo e in villa. Saggi sul Rinascimento perduto* (Venice, Arsenale editrice, 1988), II–28: p. 15.

76 On the merger of these elements with sixteenth-century Petrarchism see A. Brundin, "Petrarch and the Italian Reformation," in *Petrarch in Britain. Interpreters, Imitators, and Translatoris over 700 Years*, eds., M. McLaughlin, L. Panizza and P. Hainsworth (Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2007), 131–148: 138. On the disproportion between the number of Dante (9) and Petrarch's (60) editions published between 1536 and 1560, see C. Dionisotti, *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Turin, Einaudi, 1967), 241.

77 See now the critical edition of this work in Erasmo da Rotterdam, *Scritti religiosi e morali*, ed. by C. Asso, introduction by A. Prosperi (Turin, Einaudi 2004), 306–366.

78 "Apparecchia a tutti la salute eterna;" *ibid.*, 313.

79 S. Seidel Menchi, *Erasmo in Italia 1520–1580* (Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 1987), 163–167.

predestination, giving body and substance to what was evocatively defined as “open-air theology”.<sup>80</sup>

In opposition to Luther’s theology of the cross, Erasmus recommended having faith in infinite divine mercy, which meant that there was no sin that could not be forgiven; even Cain and Judas would have been saved if they had appealed to it.<sup>81</sup> The fundamental truth of Christianity was that nobody should give up hope about being forgiven by God because of his merciful essence. There was no need to attribute excessive importance to obscure matters that were difficult for the human intellect to understand, such as divine prescience or the relationship between human will and divine grace, also because they were irrelevant for purposes of salvation. It was therefore better to reduce the dogmatic knowledge of men of faith to minimum terms: Erasmus denied the need for theological controversies as an instrument for reaching religious truth. The essence of Christianity lay simply in faith in God and his just and merciful nature, from which no one could fear any wrong or despair about forgiveness. The most serious sin before God was thus not atheism, but desperation about grace and divine goodness, which led to denial of divine omnipotence: “If God, defeated and surpassed by the size of the sin, cannot forgive, you take away his omnipotence; if he does not want what he can, he is useless and mendacious.”<sup>82</sup> According to Erasmus, the action of divine mercy would not even stop in the face of hell; at the end of time, God would even save demons.<sup>83</sup>

The publishing history of Erasmus’s *Trattato della grandezza della misericordia di Dio* leads us directly to a central figure in the intellectual development of Francesco Pucci in Florence—the Florentine priest and pedagogue Eufrosino Lapini. The author of study manuals for classical languages and Italian, Lapini spent many years in Bologna, where he taught Greek and Latin to German

80 *Ibid.*, pp. 143 ff.

81 Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Scritti religiosi e morali*, 341–342; for the Latin text cf. *De magnitudine misericordiarum Domini concio*, in *Opera omnia*, V, 557–88: 574–75.

82 “Se Dio, vinto e superato dalla grandezza del peccato, non può perdonare, tu gli togli e levi via la onnipotenza, se egli ancora non vuole quello che egli può, egli è vano e mendace;” *ibid.*, 316; *De magnitudine*, 560.

83 *Ibid.*, 330; *De magnitudine*, 568. On this text, see Adriano Prosperi’s Introduction to the quoted edition and D. Pirillo, *Filosofia ed eresia nell’Inghilterra del tardo Cinquecento. Bruno, Sidney e i dissidenti religiosi italiani* (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2010), 78–82, who also focuses on the English edition of Erasmus’s text, published by Thomas Berthelet in London in 1526, and the influence of Origen on Erasmus’s thinking. On the latter aspect, a fundamental source is still A. Godin, *Erasme, lecteur d’Origéne*, Droz, Geneva, 1982, but see now also P. Terracciano, *Omnia in figura. L’impronta di Origene tra ‘400 e ‘500* (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2012).

students.<sup>84</sup> Pucci associated with this learned figure for two or three years during the most receptive and fertile period of his education.<sup>85</sup> Lapini was also the founder of the Accademia dei Lucidi, which was created “for the use of young Florentine noblemen”<sup>86</sup> and had erudite pupils such as Giorgio Bartoli, Lorenzo Giacomini, and Filippo Sassetti. His profound knowledge of Pico’s works—he produced a translation of the *Regule XII* in the appendix to his *Esposizione [...] sopra l’orazione del Signore tratta dal Concilio Coloniese* (*Exposition [...] on the Lord’s Prayer taken from the Council of Cologne*), as well as a translation of the *Dichiarazione sopra il Pater Noster* (*Declaration on the Lord’s Prayer*), to which we shall soon return—must have had a profound influence on his pupil Francesco Pucci, extending his acquaintance with Pico’s writings.<sup>87</sup> The name of Eufrosino Lapini is also remembered for a series of works on rhetoric and grammar,<sup>88</sup> a commentary on Petrarch’s sonnet, *Lasciato hai morte senza sole il mondo* (*Death, you have left the earth without the sun*), which clearly shows

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84 Lapini dedicated to his German students some of his vernacular works collected in his *Lettere toscane* (Bologna, Anselmo Giaccarelli, 1556).

85 On Lapini, in addition to the entry by G. Girimonti Greco, in DBI, 63, 721–724, see also G. Bartoli, *Lettere a Lorenzo Giacomini*, ed. by A. Siekiera (Florence, Accademia della Crusca, 1997), 310–311.

86 The statute of the *Accademia* established that those Florentine “giovinetti” deliver each month an essay of theirs to the consul or to the censor, either in the Tuscan language or in Latin and Greek, as a way to exercise their noble talent; this is what emerges from a dedicatory letter written by Lapini himself to the *Bali* Raffaello de’ Medici and included in his *Stanze dell’ufficio e dignità dell’uomo*, published by Giunti in 1560; see Maylender, *Storia delle Accademie d’Italia*, II, 10.

87 The *XII Regole per insegnare la perseveranza nella vita Christiana*—included as an appendix to his *Esposizione non meno utile che dotta sopra l’orazione del Signore tratta dal Concilio Coloniese* (in Florence, appresso Lorenzo Torrentino, 1562) cc. 88r–91v—were a simple translation of the *Regulae XII* by Pico della Mirandola, whose name was omitted by Lapini; see E. Garin, “Aneddoti di storia della cultura del Cinquecento (con una postilla su Eufrosino Lapini),” in *Umanesimo e Rinascimento. Studi offerti a Paul Oskar Kristeller* (Florence, Olschki, 1980), 155–172: 172.

88 In 1560, with the official approval by the censors of the Florentine *Accademia*, Lorenzo Torrentino published in Florence his *Institutiones Grecae ad Philippum Machiavellum*; in 1561 the *De octo partibus orationis et earum constructione libellus* was published by Sermartelli and in 1569 the *Institutionum Florentinae linguae libri duo* appeared from the Giunti (then republished in 1574 and 1598), dedicated to Jane of Habsburg, Francis I de’ Medici’s wife; between 1569 and 1570, Sermartelli published also his *Latinae institutiones*. The *Institutiones Grecae* by Eufrosino Lapini were the first work to be published in Florence with the authorization of both the bishop and the inquisitor (Plaisance, “Littérature et censure à Florence à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: le retour du censuré,” in idem, *L’Accademia e il suo principe*, 339–362: 342).

the influence of Neoplatonic thinking,<sup>89</sup> and a treatise on pedagogy in 1571 entitled *Anassarcho. Ovvero trattato de' costumi e modi che si debbano tenere, o schifare nel dare opera agli studii. Discorso utilissimo ad ogni virtuoso e nobile scolaro* (the *Anassarcho. Or a treatise on customs and manners to be observed or eschewed in the production of works. A most useful discourse to all virtuous and noble students*). Finally, he was involved in the translation and distribution of certain medieval spiritual texts. One of the first of these was *Paradiso dell'anima* (*Spiritual Paradise*) by Alberto Magno, which appeared in an elegant edition published by Giunti,<sup>90</sup> dedicated to Margherita Paleologa, who was the heiress to the Marquisate of Monferrato and the Duchess of Mantua, with links to Bernardino Ochino and Federico Fregoso, and dedicatee of the first translation of Erasmus's *Trattato della misericordia* (*Treatise on mercy*) in 1542 in Mantua.<sup>91</sup> This was no random coincidence; when Ludovico Domenichi translated and published *Virginis et martyrii comparatio* (*Comparison of the virgin and the martyr*) by Erasmus—a work which in nearly all of its sixteenth-century editions, starting from the *editio princeps*, appeared together with the *Concio de immensa misericordia Dei* (*Peroration concerning God's immense mercy*)—at the same time as the publication of the aforementioned Florentine translation of the Erasmian treatise (1554), the appendix also included a contribution by Lapini, *Dichiaratione sopra il Pater nostro del signor Pico della Mirandola* (*Declaration on the Lord's Prayer by Messer Giovanni Pico della Mirandola*).<sup>92</sup> It is worth focusing on the not entirely orthodox character of similar publishing initiatives at the time, not only to observe that works such as *Concio* and *Virginis et martyrii comparatio* (*Comparison of virgins and martyrs*) were widely distributed in Calvinist circles such as Achille Benvoglienti's Grosseto group,<sup>93</sup> but above all to underline that the incitement to spiritual and mental prayer and the insistence on the Lord's Prayer as the only one with true

89 This is the *Letione di m. Frosino Lapini academico fiorentino nella quale si ragiona in universale del fine della poesia sopra il sonetto di m. Francesco Petrarca. Lasciato hai morte senza sole il mondo. Letta privatamente nella Accademia fiorentina nel consolato del magnifico m. Iacopo Pitti* (In Fiorenza, appresso Valente Panizij e compagni, 1567).

90 *Opera spirituale di Alberto Magno intitolata Paradiso dell'anima. Tradotta in lingua toscana per Messer Frosino Lapini. Nuovamente stampata* (In Fiorenza, appresso i Giunti, 1556).

91 Seidel Menchi, *Erasmo in Italia*, 164–165 and *supra*.

92 *Il paragone della vergine, et del martire, e una oratione d'Erasmo Roterodamo a Giesù Christo, tradotti per m. Lodovico Domenichi. Con una dichiaratione sopra il Pater nostro del s. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, tradotta per Frosino Lapino. Opere non meno utili che dilettevoli et pie* (Florence, appresso Lorenzo Torrentino, 1554).

93 Seidel Menchi, *Erasmo in Italia*, 166.

value had been sing of a message that was doctrinally and socially dangerous for at least a decade. The many *Espositioni sopra il Pater* (*Expositions on the Lord's Prayer*) published in those years increasingly recommended the use of Sunday prayers to disseminate opinions that were more or less openly hostile to the Church of Rome. Numerous inquisitorial documents from the end of the 1540s show that the exaltation of the Lord's Prayer was closely identified with the presence of heretical doctrines. Pico's *Dichiaratione sopra il Pater Noster* (*Declaration on the Lord's Prayer*), translated by Lapini, was no exception to the rule. It had previously been translated into another vernacular version by Celio Secondo Curione in the early 1540s and presented to the learned reading public as one of his last bequests before his flight from Italy.<sup>94</sup> In the dense pages of his *Dichiaratione* (*Declaration*), Pico had not hesitated to state that intense personal meditation must be based on an understanding of the literal sense of the Evangelical text, in particular, on the exclusive model of prayer offered by Christ in the Gospel. Alongside the Erasmian invitation to be tolerant in matters of religion, expressed above all in a passage where he urged the devout to "pray for the Jews, for the Turks, for the heretics and for all Christians", there was no lack of doctrinally compromising statements, such as "it is a certainty that it is not through our merits that we achieve salvation but solely through the mercy of God."<sup>95</sup>

Lapini returned to the subject of prayer on many occasions in subsequent years, not only in the aforementioned *Esposizione non meno utile che dotta sopra l'orazione del Signore tratta dal Concilio Coloniese* (*Exposition, both useful and scholarly, on the Lord's Prayer taken from the Council of Cologne*), but also in his *Discorso sopra l'orazione e modo di orare a Dio secondo la dottrina de dottori sagri et cattolici* (*Discourse on prayer and the manner of praying to God according to the doctrine of the holy and Catholic Doctors*),<sup>96</sup> an original and personal reworking of patristic and scriptural writings on the matter of prayer. The *Proemio dello huomo et sua condizione* (*Proemium on man and his condition*) at the start of this *Discorso* (*Discourse*) is a good example of the theological

94 Prosperi, "Celio Secondo Curione e gli autori italiani da Pico al 'Beneficio di Cristo'", in *Giovanni e Gianfrancesco Pico. L'opera e la fortuna di due studenti ferraresi*, ed. by P. Castelli (Florence, Olschki, 1998), 163–185.

95 "È cosa certa che noi non ci salviamo per i meriti nostri, ma per la sola misericordia di Dio"; *Il Paragone della vergine et del martire e una oratione d'Erasmo, ... a Giesù Christo, tradotti per M. Lodovico Domenichi, con una Dichiaratione sopra il pater nostro del S. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, tradotta per Frosino Lapino* (Florence, per Torrentino, 1554), 89. More generally, for the reflections broached here, see G. Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer. Church Censorship and Devotional Literature in Renaissance Italy* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2011), 19–20.

96 In Fiorenza, appresso Lorenzo Torrentino, 1562.

sensitivity and philosophical knowledge that Pucci encountered directly during his education in Florence. The exaltation of man created in the image and likeness of God, “full of divine nature and enlightened by reason, spirit, intellect, awareness and knowledge of divine matters”, “a reasonable soul enriched with so many gifts”,<sup>97</sup> was accompanied in Lapini’s work by the description of an original “state of innocence, where quiet and peaceful sense was entirely subject to reason.”<sup>98</sup> This original state of innocence had been shattered by the “original sin, from which the entire human generation became stained with the transgression of our first relative,”<sup>99</sup> by “Adam’s sin”, which had triggered in man “perpetual internal struggle and ceaseless unrelenting combat [...] as harsh as it was difficult and tedious to overcome,”<sup>100</sup> forcing the intellect to pit itself against forces that act “against good inspiration, against the salvation of the soul, and against the divine commandment”,<sup>101</sup> so much so that “all the dignity of man now consists of nothing but dominating [the bodily members] and fighting bravely and striving to use all the weapons of humility against pride, those of charity against envy, those of chastity against lust and those of meekness against ire.”<sup>102</sup> Lapini was keen to underline that human nature had not lost all its essential qualities, that the intellect never ceased “to show what is good and so make man want it and adopt it”,<sup>103</sup> and that although “because of the sin that had been committed, man was expelled from the delights of earthly Paradise and cast into such misery because of his disobedience”, at the same time “He did not deprive him [...] of his arms nor did He deny him the grace of using them against his enemies and thus against the whole

97 “Ripieno d[e]lla natura divina e illuminato di ragione, spirito, d'intelletto, di cognizione, e sapienza delle divine cose”, “anima ragionevole, di tante doti ornata”; Lapini, *Proemio dello huomo et sua conditione*, in *idem, Discorso*, cc. 8v–9r.

98 “Stato di innocenza, dove il senso stava del tutto soggetto alla ragione quieto e in pace”; *ibid.*, c. 13v.

99 “Original peccato, onde tutta l'umana generazione macchiata divenne al trasgredire del nostro primo parente”; *ibid.*, c. 12r.

100 “Interiore perpetua briga, e combattimento senza tregua o posa alcuna [...] non meno aspro che difficile et noioso a superarlo”; *ibid.*

101 “Contro alle buone inspirazioni, contro alla salute dell'anima, e contro al divino comandamento”; *ibid.*, c. 12r.

102 “Tutta la dignità dell'huomo altrove ora non consiste, che in domar [le corporali membra] e fortemente combattendo adoperare e servirsi di tutte le armi: dell'umiltà contro alla superbia, della carità contro all'invidia, della castità contro alla lussuria, della mansuetudine contro all'ira”; *ibid.*, cc. 13r–v.

103 “Mostrar[e] il bene, e così farlo a l'huomo volere, et eleggere”; *ibid.*, c. 12v.

world.”<sup>104</sup> According to Lapini, human nature was destined to defeat the “flame of concupiscence”<sup>105</sup> because of “God’s immense and infinite goodness” and because of the grace given “for our salvation [...] for the merits of the blood shed by the Word Incarnate on the wooden cross.”<sup>106</sup>

This “Proemium” therefore contained many of the ideas that Pucci later reworked in his complex and not always coherent theology, from the original state of innocence to the possibility of man to preserve his natural predisposition for good and ensure salvation despite the corruption of the original sin, precisely because of the benefit of Christ for all humankind. It concluded by exalting human will, “which, freely and unconstrained by any violence, has full power to choose what it is most willing to turn to [...]: good, if it applies itself to good things taught and shown by reason, or bad, if it yields to evil and the incitements of appetites that are equivocal, carnal and enjoyable, imprisoned by the soul most pleasurable, enlivening the senses and spreading its pleasures throughout its bodily members”<sup>107</sup> This passage previews the central role that Pucci later attributed to human reason and education; he saw man’s immortality (eternal salvation) as a natural gift from God that could only be lost by misusing reason and judgement—the same process of “turning [the will of man] to evil” (*volgere al male*) that Lapini referred to. Man could preserve his original innocence over the course of his life or it might be corrupted; it depended on a factor—education—that Pucci attributed great importance to in typically humanistic fashion. Education had the power to preserve natural innocence or cause it to deviate. In short, *Proemio dell’uomo et sua condizione* (*Proemium on man and his condition*) contains the essence of many of the doctrines that Pucci subsequently developed in the framework of a radical and sometimes subversive theological vision. Lapini provided evidence of the link between the Platonic tradition and religious heterodoxy, not only in his translation of Pico’s *Espositione sopra il Pater* (*Exposition on the Lord’s Prayer*), but also in the network of European relations that he was beginning to build at the time.

<sup>104</sup> Sebbene “per il commesso errore fu l’huomo del mezzo delle delizie del terrestre paradiso tolto via, e drento a tante miserie per la sua disobbedienza condotto”, tuttavia “non gli tolse [...] le armi, né lo privò della grazia di adoperarle contro a nemici, e così contro a tutto il mondo”; *ibid.*, c. 14r.

<sup>105</sup> “Fomite della concupiscenza”; *ibid.*, c. 13r.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, cc. 14r-v.

<sup>107</sup> “La quale libera né ad alcuna violenza soggetta ha intera potestà di eleggersi quello appunto, a che più le piace voltarsi [...]: buona se a cose buone si applica, insegnateli e mostrategli dalla ragione, o vero mala se a rei consigli cede e incitamenti del vago, carnale e dilettevole appetito, nel quale l’anima, che avviva il senso et in tutte le corporali membra spande i piaceri suoi, piacevolissimamente la fa prigione”; *ibid.*, c. 11r.

In 1563, he wrote an impassioned biography of Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, a pupil of Marsilio Ficino and a tireless leading light at the Florentine Platonic Academy. It was published in the appendix of an edition of Cattani's *Opera omnia* edited by Theodor Zwinger for Perna (and Petri) of Basle.<sup>108</sup> The publication of *Opera omnia* was part of Perna's long-term initiative to rediscover and develop the Platonic and Ficinian tradition, an important part of a publishing project that had included the publication of *Enneads* by Plotinus a few years previously in a translation with a Latin commentary by Marsilio Ficino.<sup>109</sup> The work was dedicated to Cosimo de' Medici in an attempt to urge the Duke to breathe new life into a tradition with illustrious predecessors. It cannot be overlooked, however, that in the previous year the publisher of Lapini's biography of Cattani da Diacceto had printed *Dialogi triginta* (*Thirty dialogues*), the most subversive and radical text by Bernardino Ochino, almost all of whose works had been published by Perna from 1549 onwards. In 1565 he published the *Stratagemata Satanae* (*Satan's stratagems*) by the Trent heretic Jacob Acontius, which was one of the most influential writings in the history of religious tolerance, as well as a work by Celio Secondo Curione, the author of the well-known *De amplitudine regni Dei* (*On the amplitude of God's Kingdom*). As a result, Perna became the spokesperson for the Italian heretical diaspora. It is therefore easy to see that Lapini's religious profile was not entirely in line with the canons of Roman orthodoxy.

Pucci's encounter with Lapini had two effects on his final destiny. It was probably thanks to Lapini that he came into contact with the Rinuccini family

<sup>108</sup> *Opera omnia Francisci Catanei Diacetii patricii Florentini, philosophi summi, Nunc primum in lucem edita. . . . Accessit index rerum & uerborum memorabilium copiosissimus* (Basileae, per Henrichum Petri, & Petrum Pernam, 1563). See also L. Perini, *La vita e i tempi di Pietro Perna* (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2002), 164–165. Just years earlier, Benedetto Varchi had written a *Vita* of Diacceto that remained in manuscript until the nineteenth-century; see B. Varchi, *Vita di Francesco Cattani da Diacceto scritta da B. Varchi* (Ancona, 1845). On the similarities between the two works, with a special reference to the praises bestowed on the “Accademia di Lorenzo il vecchio”, see J. Hankins, “The Platonic Academy of Florence and Renaissance Historiography,” in *Forme del neoplatonismo. Dall'eredità ficiniana ai platonici di Cambridge*, Atti del convegno (Firenze, 25–27 ottobre 2001), ed. by L. Simonutti (Florence, Olschki, 2007), 75–96: 80–81.

<sup>109</sup> Plotinus, *De rebus Philosophicis libri LIII in Enneades sex distributi* (Basileae, P. Perna, 1559); see, for this edition, Rotondò, “Pietro Perna e la vita culturale e religiosa di Basilea fra il 1570 e il 1580,” in idem, *Studi e ricerche di storia ereticale* (Turin, Giappichelli, 1974), 273–391: 343 ff.; M. Muccillo, “Plotino nel tardo Rinascimento,” in eadem, *Platonismo*, 195–289: 195–200; L. Perini, *La vita e i tempi di Pietro Perna*, 425. Perini formulated the hypothesis that Perna came across Plotino either reading Petrarch's *Trionfi* or transcribing the inventory of Pico della Mirandola's books from the catalogue of Grimani's library in Venice, as he was asked to do by Conrad Gesner (*ibid.*, 162).

and chose to leave Florence, which had become a difficult place to live in, and go to work at their bank in Lyons to gain business experience in 1563; indeed, a certain Andrea Rinuccini is mentioned together with Antonio Brucioli as one of Francesco Cattani da Diacceto's companions in the latter's biography published in 1563, but above all one of Lapini's works from 1561, *De octo partibus orationis et earum constructione libellus* (*On the eight parts of prayer and the book of their construction*) is dedicated to Nicola Rinuccini's sons, Giovanni Paolo and Bonaccorso, a clear sign of the level of familiarity and trust that must have influenced Pucci's choice.

The young Florentine apprentice merchant therefore arrived in Lyons with a range of reading knowledge and doctrinal ideas that the dynamic climate of the French city—characterised by the complicated co-existence of different religious confessions—soon developed into a more precise theological vision, leading him to the radical choice of exile in the space of a few years.

### 3      "A New Theology"

Before retracing Francesco Pucci's lengthy European wanderings in exile, it is opportune to focus on the results of his unconventional religious education by defining the basic points of the theological vision that he developed in early life and honed in the following years. As pointed out above, Pucci was not really a theologian and never developed a coherent and systematic theological proposal. Indeed, after moving to Lyons, he decided to play a role as a religious polemicist. Like many polemicists, starting from a solid knowledge of the sacred texts, he chose to endorse single aspects of his own thinking, adapting his religious positions to the expediency of the moment and the circumstances of each opponent (or opponents), whether in a public disputation or through impassioned controversialist pamphlets. However, we can still reconstruct the main stages of his intellectual and religious evolution and establish some fixed points of reference in his theological thinking, which Pucci himself defined as a "new theology" (*teologia novella*).<sup>110</sup> Many of his works, as we shall see, remained manuscripts; he summarised their contents in two volumes printed in 1579 and 1592, respectively entitled *Informatione della religione christiana* and *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*. Through his published and unpublished works and his rich correspondence, which has mostly been published,<sup>111</sup> it is possible to identify the theological arguments that

<sup>110</sup> Pucci used this expression in *Informatione della religione christiana*; we will focus on it a few pages below and at greater length *infra*, chap. II, par. 3.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *supra*.

Pucci used most frequently in the religious disputes that he was involved in. To this end, the first relevant documents date back to early 1575, when he was in London and regularly attended meetings at the French Church, one of the many churches of exiles that characterized religious life in the city.<sup>112</sup> As Fausto Sozzini recalled years later in a letter to Matteo Radeke, Pucci had already distinguished himself for the number of disputes he had held with Calvinist scholars in private or in public, earning himself a reputation as an arrogant and obstinate polemicist.<sup>113</sup> During a gathering of the faithful, when a minister was commenting on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Pucci publicly asked for the floor to object to what was taught about the Eucharist. The ministers duly refused, affirming that he had not been assigned any mandate. At that point, Pucci accused them of having asserted erroneous ideas about faith, the Lord's Supper, original sin and sin against the Holy Ghost. The case was examined by the Consistory of the French Church, who invited Pucci to provide a written account of his objections; he subsequently presented two *memoriali* dated 22 January and 7 March 1575. His first two known theological writings were therefore the product of precise polemical intent. The first one addressed the subject of faith, while the second one dealt with the Supper, original sin and the sin against the Holy Ghost.<sup>114</sup> The thesis on faith must have served a preliminary function: he affirmed that faith is not a question of accepting particular promises contained in the Scriptures, but a simple state of mind that leads man to have total trust in God. This general faith precedes promises and pacts and is necessary to understand the Scriptures, which are otherwise incomprehensible. His central thesis concerned the intimate essence of faith: instead of being founded in the later divine promise of salvation and heaven, it is the original act of religious conscience, surrendering trustingly to God's infinite goodness and benevolence towards man. Pucci admitted that nobody could have faith except by divine gift. He therefore appeared to approve the Calvinist theses of predestination to good and an original and interior infused faith that appears as a testimony of the Spirit, enlightening the believer

<sup>112</sup> For the context of the birth and development of churches of foreign exiles in London, in addition to the classic work by L. Firpo, "La Chiesa italiana di Londra nel Cinquecento e i suoi rapporti con Ginevra," in idem, *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia* (Naples, Prismi, 1996), 117–194, see now G. Caravale, "La Chiesa italiana di Londra nella seconda metà del '500. Note e riflessioni su Alberigo Gentili e altri esuli italiani *religionis causa*," in *Alberico Gentili. "Responsability to Protect": nuovi orientamenti su intervento umanitario e ordine internazionale*, (Macerata, Eum, 2015), 175–194.

<sup>113</sup> Letter of 8 January 1586, in *Bibliotheca Fratrum polonorum*, Irenopoli, 1656, I, p. 379; see also Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 174.

<sup>114</sup> For the text of the two *memoriali*, cf. J.H. Hessels, *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae Archivum (Cantabriagiae, 1897)*, III, doc. 313, 328, 333; pp. 280, 293–299 and 302–303.

and authenticating the entire corpus of written law in his innermost being. However, Pucci stressed a crucial point of departure from Calvin's position by referring faith to the goodness of God before and beyond any promise; Calvin had clearly stated that man participates in Christ through faith in the Gospel and the full certainty of the promises expressed therein. Pucci insisted that the Old Testament never made it a precept for man to fathom divine mysteries; he was only encouraged to increase his trust in God and conform with God's will. Therefore, the faith of the patriarchs of the Old Testament could not be based on knowledge of those mysteries, which only became clear with the incarnation. Similarly, their devotion and obedience to God could not be explained without recognizing that they had full trust and complete agreement with the spirit of Christ, which thus already supported the Church of believers even before manifesting itself in the flesh.<sup>115</sup> The Consistory of the French Church refused to discuss this first *memoriale* until Pucci provided them with a written version of his doctrines on the Eucharist, original sin and sin against the Holy Ghost. He duly did this with his second *memoriale*, which he presented on 7 March. Regarding the Eucharist, he criticized the Calvinist solution by taking a Zwinglian position. The text is somewhat reticent about the point in question, but it can be deduced from the few notations present that he was criticizing French Protestants for neglecting the aspect of commemoration at the moment of the Eucharist, an element that he claimed that Paul had remembered three times in his letters to the Corinthians. Pucci also seemed to adopt a similar position to Zwingli's doctrine on original sin by comparing Adam's sin to a disease handed down to his descendants: "not sin, but illness" (non peccatum, sed morbum), therefore in opposition to the Calvinist doctrine of the total irreparable fall and fatal corruption due to the fallacious desire of freedom. Pucci only mentioned the third question—sin against the Holy Ghost—briefly and somewhat cryptically, stating that it can only be understood well by clarifying what the spirit of perfect freedom is, a spirit—he added polemically—that many ignore. This point was probably at the heart of the dispute with the Consistory of the French Church and it led to relations breaking off definitively in the space of a few weeks. Pucci was also permanently suspended from the sacraments that he had participated in on a regular basis. After presenting his second *memoriale*, Pucci categorically refused to recognize the authority of the members of the Consistory, asking for a third party ruling over their dispute.

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115 L. Firpo, "Francesco Pucci in Inghilterra," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, v (1951), 158–173, now in *idem, Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia* (Naples, Prismi, 1996), 53–65; 57–58. See also A. Rotondò, Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra e i primi scritti teologici di Francesco Pucci, in *idem, Studi di storia eretica del Cinquecento* (Florence, Olschki, 2008), II, 577–615.

This wrangling continued for some weeks, but in the end, as mentioned, the judgement led to his expulsion by the senior members of the French Church.<sup>116</sup> Pucci thus followed the same destiny as a Spanish exile, Antonio del Corro, at a distance of a few years. This former Hieronymite monk had been Pucci's guide and master in the years in question and had been subjected to very similar treatment from the same French Church five years previously.<sup>117</sup> However, Pucci did not accept the defeat and attempted to extend the terms of the controversy over the following months by letter. On 30 November 1575, he wrote a long letter on the subject of faith addressed to Johann Jakob Grynæus in Basle. Grynæus was a disciple of Simon Sulzer and Martin Borrhaus, both of whom were at the helm of the local Church together with Ulrich Koch. He enclosed a "pamphlet" (libellum)—now lost—and asked him to read it and then send it on to Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich.<sup>118</sup> The importance that Pucci gave to propaganda is shown by the fact that he also asked Grynæus to bring his reasoning to the attention of Girolamo Zanchi in Heidelberg.

A subsequent letter that Pucci wrote to Niccolò Balbani, the minister of the Italian Church in Geneva, provides perhaps the most consistent and developed account of his theological thinking.<sup>119</sup> It assumes the scale of a short treatise in the vernacular on the problem of sin and predestination. The central theme—formulated here explicitly for the first time—is the amplitude of God's mercy and the universal salvation of humankind. Pucci felt that the original sin had

<sup>116</sup> L. Firpo, "Francesco Pucci in Inghilterra," 60–61.

<sup>117</sup> For a comparsion of Pucci and Del Corro's doctrines, see A. Rotondò, "Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra," in *idem, Studi di storia ereticale*, II, 612–16.

<sup>118</sup> The letter is reproduced in A. Rotondò, *Studi di storia ereticale*, II, pp. 743–755: 754–755. More generally, for a contextualization of relations between Pucci and Grynæus and the role of the latter in the sixteenth-century religious landscape, see A. Rotondò, "Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra di Francesco Pucci." The find and identification of this "libellum" was announced by Mario Biagioli in 2001 (M. Biagioli, "Universalismo e tolleranza nel pensiero di Francesco Pucci"). However, a few years later, Biagioli retracted this attribution, rectifying what had been claimed previously; M. Biagioli, "La ragione dell'immortalità: la disputa tra Francesco Pucci e Fausto Sozzini "de statu primi hominis ante lapsum,"" in *Faustus Socinus and his heritage*, ed. by Lech Szczucki (Kraków, 2005), 53–89: 58 and 71–75.

<sup>119</sup> For the text of the letter, cf. Pucci, *Lettere*, I, pp. 23–54. On the matter of the dating of the letter, which is damaged and without a heading, cf. A. Rotondò, 'Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra', in *idem, Studi di storia ereticale*, II, 604, who dates it to Pucci's first stay in England (end of 1575—beginning of 1576), thereby correcting the dating provided by Luigi Firpo, who had been convinced that it had been sent from Basle in 1578 after his private dispute with Fausto Sozzini had concluded; L. Firpo, "Francesco Pucci a Basilea," in *idem, Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia*, 89–96.

caused “a major flaw” (un gran difetto) in human nature, but nevertheless “it will never be found that this original sin is attributed to anyone for eternal damnation.” He added that there was infinite proof of God’s benevolence towards humankind without any distinctions on the basis of race or lineage. However, it is above all through the universal availability of the benefit of Christ that God’s free benevolence is put into effect, redeeming all men “from the womb” (dalla matrice): “the important thing that I base myself on is the remedy of the Messiah, that God gave to the human race, and it was such that everybody is party to it in the maternal womb.”<sup>120</sup> In dispute with the positions taught by Reformed ministers, Pucci therefore claimed that all men are born and remain in a condition of innocence before the use of reason and judgement and that although the human heart is inclined towards evil as a result of Adam’s sin, it will never be found written anywhere that this flaw is the cause of eternal damnation, because God provided a remedy through the benefit of Christ, which everyone enjoys from the mother’s womb onwards. Pucci argued that it would therefore be ignoble of any reasonable man, “as well as of God, who is reason and wisdom itself,” “to give efficacious salvation to only one or two in a million, as it can be given to everyone.”<sup>121</sup> Therefore, sin cannot be attributed to human nature; one of the examples adopted by Pucci to demonstrate this thesis was the state of uncorrupted innocence of infants. The possibility of sin (and damnation) can only arise in adulthood with the use of reason and judgement and the formation of awareness of behaviour and personal responsibility: “damnation only affects evil and perverse adults and [...] the others are all in a state of salvation.”<sup>122</sup>

The letter clearly shows Pucci’s opposition to Calvin’s predestinarian theories. In contrast to the Calvinist limit on the number of the elect, Pucci developed the theme of the amplitude of the kingdom of God by basing it on a spiritualist concept of Christ. Even before the Incarnate Word or the historical Christ born to Mary and Joseph, Pucci’s Christ was God’s “wisdom and reason.”<sup>123</sup> The Church supported by this “spirit of Christ” (*spiritus Christi*) without a

<sup>120</sup> “Non si troverà mai che questo original difetto sia imputato ad alcuno a dannazione eterna;” “l’importanza dove io mi fondo, scriveva Pucci, è il rimedio del Messia, che Iddio ha dato a l’umana schiatta, ed è stato tale che ognuno ne è partecipe nel ventre materno;” Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 30.

<sup>121</sup> “Nonché d’Iddio, che è la ragione e la sapienza stessa; ‘non dar salute efficace se non a uno o due per milione, potendola dare a tutti;” Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 26.

<sup>122</sup> “La dannazione non casca se non negli adulti malvagi e perversi e [...] gli altri tutti sono in istato di salute;” Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 29.

<sup>123</sup> *Lettere*, 1, 50.

historical dimension already existed before the incarnation: as we have seen, Pucci had started to focus on this concept at the time of his dispute with the Consistory of the French Church. He could therefore now express his idea of a church of regenerated men, a timeless church that had always existed by virtue of the salvation granted freely to all humankind, a view opposed to the rigid institutionalization of the Calvinist Reformed churches. For Pucci, criticism of the hierarchical structure of the churches, rejection of the principle of authority and the need for free interpretation of the word of God were the corollary of the idea that all men are destined to be saved.

Pucci's reflection about original sin and the original innocence of man started in his letter to Balbani and was further developed during the subsequent months spent in Basle. In May 1577, his encounter with Fausto Sozzini at Francesco Betti's house—Betti was a mutual friend and Roman exile who had moved to Basle ten years previously—launched a doctrinal discussion that soon turned into a lively controversial dispute. Stubbornly defending the affirmation of the immortality of the first man, Pucci engaged in a heated debate that led to the drafting of four sizeable manuscript contributions: the *Argumenta decem pro immortalitate rerum* and the *Confutatio dogmatis de mortalitate rerum a Deo creatarum in primo earum statu* by Pucci, respectively dated 4 June and 1 July 1577, and the *Responsio qua argumenta pro immortalitate primi hominis breviter refelluntur* and the *Copiosa refutatio* by Sozzini, respectively dated 11 June 1577 and 27 January 1578. The four texts were collected and printed for the first time in 1610 at the Socinian centre in Rakow under the title *De statu primi hominis ante lapsum disputatio*.<sup>124</sup> While the studies by Luigi Firpo and Mario Biagioni should be consulted for more in-depth analysis of the individual texts, the basic difference was that Pucci claimed that Adam had been created by God with an immortal nature, whereas Sozzini defended the idea that the absence of death was a transitory condition granted to him by God in earthly paradise. While the Florentine exile stated that the first man had been created in the image and likeness of God and nothing was further from his perfection than death, his compatriot from Siena claimed that only divine benevolence—God's grace—had allowed Adam to enjoy a state of innocence before committing the sin. During this dispute, Pucci dramatized his concept of original sin as a total catastrophe of nature (not only human)

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<sup>124</sup> On the content of this dispute, see L. Firpo, "Francesco Pucci a Basilea," in *idem, Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia*, 67–89. And now a modern edition edited by M. Biagioni: Fausto Sozzini, Francesco Pucci, *De statu primi hominis ante lapsum disputatio* (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2010), in particular the extensive and detailed introduction by Biagioni (IX–LXIV).

in order to exalt the role of complete reparation played by Christian redemption: he presented the benefit of Christ as a universal and free act, immediately effective and automatic, leading to the restoration of original goodness. According to this concept, strongly influenced by Platonizing mysticism with Ficinian overtones, a righteous man only needed general faith in the Creator to enjoy the full effectiveness of the benefit through which Christ had perfectly reinstated humanity in its original state of immortality and perfection by dying on the cross. Sozzini opposed Pucci's religious naturalism and spontaneous justice with active justice, overcoming temptation and evil on a daily basis in a concrete moral commitment that required strong adhesion to the precepts of Christ and outside of which no salvation was given. He therefore denied the possibility of natural knowledge of God that was effective for salvation. He felt that there was no natural religion that allowed man to acquire the *fundamentalia fidei* outside of the evangelical message. Claiming, as Pucci did, that salvation was also guaranteed to those unaware of the Gospel because they had lived before Christ as pagans, because they died before having use of reason (children) or because they were born in a country that the preaching of the word of God had not yet reached (the New World) was an unacceptable negation of the principles of Christianity. This led Sozzini to ask: "What can be more shameful to the Christian name than believing that our salvation is due to carnal descent from Christ? Almost as if he himself only reached a state of immortality because he was a man and not, as is frequently certified, because he obeyed the will of God, his father, and for the promised joy, he did not refuse to suffer death on the cross."<sup>125</sup> As Sozzini admitted some years later, Pucci and he only agreed about the issue of the sole existence of "eternal God, creator of heaven and earth and all things that exist, who constantly looks after and provides for everybody."<sup>126</sup> Despite the stubborn obstinacy with which Pucci tried to follow up the dispute in the early 1580s, it ended when Sozzini left Basle at the start of 1578. The controversy, which was sometimes extremely biting in terms of tone and language, helped Pucci to refine his reasoning before

<sup>125</sup> "Che cosa può esservi di più indegno del nome cristiano se non ritenere che la nostra salvezza sia dovuta alla discendenza carnale da Cristo? Quasi che egli stesso sia giunto all'immortalità per il solo fatto di essere uomo e non, come è continuamente attestato, perché ha obbedito alla volontà di Dio suo padre e per la gioia promessa non ha rifiutato di subire la morte sulla croce;" F. Sozzini, F. Pucci, *De statu hominis*, 302.

<sup>126</sup> "Solo Dio eterno, creatore del cielo e della terra e di tutte le cose che esistono, il quale perpetuamente ha cura e provvede a tutti;" cf. the statement by Sozzini in one of the above-mentioned letters to his friend Matteo Radecke, Krakow, 8 January 1586, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 174.

he decided to present his doctrine in public for the first time. In January 1578, at the height of his private controversy with Sozzini, Pucci printed a document in Frankfurt containing *Thesis* and addressed to “all lovers of truth”. He said that he was a *theodidactus*, inspired by God, and that he was ready to defend his “thesis” with God’s help against anyone who dared to repudiate it. It expressed two main principles: firstly, “that all of humankind is an effective participant in the benefit of Christ the Saviour and Redeemer from the maternal womb and the age of innocence onwards” and secondly “that those who have use of reason and judgement receive the wisdom of God, creator of heaven and earth, for the purposes of salvation, so that they trust Him and depend on Him, and are in agreement with the saints and true Christians.”<sup>127</sup> This was the first time that Pucci had come out into the open by expressing his doctrines explicitly in public and he did not garner positive results. While Gynaeus had decided to break off relations with him some months previously, after the *Thesis* was published he was also judged harshly by Erastus, who defined him as “the Florentine beast” (illa bestia fiorentina), and fell victim to three censors at the Faculty of Theology in Basle (Ulrich Koch and Simon Sulzer signed the censorship document together with Gynaeus).

Pucci left the city, but did not stop spreading his doctrines. At the end of the following year, he published his first printed book in England, summarizing the reflections he had been developing up to that point. It was a way for him to continue spreading his doctrines, consolidating the process that had started with the publication of his *Thesis*. The *Informatione della religione christiana* came out in London with a false place of publication (“Fiorenza”); it was probably printed by John Wolf at the end of 1579. This slim volume, specially devised to explain in more detail what he had presented in his document of January 1578,<sup>128</sup> took the form of a hymn to “rational religion”, namely the element of Pucci’s thinking that coincided with natural religion, which he called “light of reason” (luce della ragione). He set out his anti-Reformed hostility for the first time in such an explicit way along with biting anti-Roman invective.<sup>129</sup> We will focus

<sup>127</sup> “Che tutto il genere umano è efficacemente partecipe del beneficio di Cristo salvatore e redentore sino dal ventre materno e dall’età dell’innocenza;” “che coloro i quali hanno l’uso della ragione e del giudizio ricevono una conoscenza di Dio, creatore del cielo e della terra, ai fini della salvezza, affinché abbiano fiducia in lui, e dipendano da lui, e siano d’accordo con i santi e veri cristiani;” the *Thesis*, printed in Frankfurt on 1 January 1578, is reproduced in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 22–23.

<sup>128</sup> This was written by Pucci in the *Avvertimento al lettore* in his *Informatione della religione christiana*.

<sup>129</sup> The complete title of the work is: *Informatione della religione christiana fondata su la divina e humana ragione, secondo che la natura et la scrittura ci insegnia*. Stampato in Fiorenza

on this text in more detail in Chapter II, just as we will consider the extraordinary project *Forma d'una republica catholica*, an anonymous manuscript work from early 1581 in which Francesco Pucci's hand has been identified, as the main author or one of the leading contributors to the project.<sup>130</sup> As we will see in the following chapters, Pucci continued his European wanderings during the 1580s, moving from England to Antwerp, Saxony, Krakow and Prague, where he decided to abjure his heresies before the Apostolic Nuncio in 1587 and return to the bosom of the Church of Rome. We will follow these events in detail in an attempt to understand what induced his desire to return to Catholicism and what then prompted him to continue to profess the same doctrines after his abjuration. One of the main reasons guiding him towards Rome in the mid-1580s was his growing aversion to the Calvinist and Lutheran Reformed Churches. As we have seen, during his first stay in England, Pucci developed an antagonistic attitude towards the Reformed Churches—too rigid and dogmatic to become places of discussion of divine truths, as he had hoped—and theological hostility towards the Calvinist concept of predestination. The manuscript work *De praedestinatione*, which he wrote in Prague in 1589, can be identified as the apex of this anti-Protestant stance.<sup>131</sup> This lengthy reflection started by giving a detailed account of the development of the universal church from the creation of the angels to Augustine's preaching (to which he attributed the origin of the predestinarian error), before launching into a precise and detailed rebuttal of the work *De aeterna praedestinatione Dei* by John Calvin (1552) and other Protestant writings on the same subject. In these dense pages, Pucci adopted a polemical stance to deny the existence of a binding and inescapable decree from God whereby he saves some men and damns others. The work contains a clear echo of the Colloquy of Montbéliard (1586), where Lukas Osiander and Jakob Andrea challenged Theodore de Bèze's rigid predestinarianism; Pucci exalted the free nature of human will and the universal efficacy of divine redemption which, thanks to the efficacy of the benefit of Christ that every man is party to from conception,

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<sup>1580</sup> [but 1579]. There is now a modern edition of this text: cf. Mario Biagioni, *Francesco Pucci e l'Informatione della religione christiana* (Turin, Claudiana, 2011), esp. 87–130.

<sup>130</sup> The work is held in a single apograph codex in the Sloane Collection in the British Museum, which bears the date 9 June 1581 at the foot, probably added by the scribe at the end of his work. The text of the *Forma* was published in L. Firpo, "Gli scritti," 253–298.

<sup>131</sup> The manuscript work held at the Archiepiscopal Archive in Salzburg was recently published in a critical edition: *De praedestinatione*, ed. by M. Biagioni (Florence, Olschki, 2000).

places humanity in a continuing state of grace.<sup>132</sup> In view of his recent conversion to Catholicism, the anti-Roman tones that had characterized his work from 1579, *Informatione della religione christiana*, were extremely muted. The same could be said of his unpublished poem in octaves, *Del Regno di Cristo*, from the same period, a text in which polemical references to the Church of Rome are almost entirely absent. The poem is the end product of a millenarian reflection that Pucci had started in the late 1570s when his religious positions were partly different. The first appearance of millenarian motifs in his writings came in the second of the two works he presented to Fausto Sozzini in July 1577, where he wrote that even beasts would become gentle again in the happy age foretold by Isaiah and would no longer tear each other to pieces.<sup>133</sup> In his *Thesis* (1578), he then briefly mentioned of Book of Revelation (14:7), in particular the words “Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.”<sup>134</sup> In less than two years, Pucci developed these starting points into a more systematic reflection clearly characterized by his anti-Roman thinking in his *Informatione della religione christiana*. In the right-hand margin of this work on a page where he launched one of his most violent attacks against the ecclesiastical kingdom of the popes and their self-important courts, he wrote vertically from top to bottom the expression “hierocratia cachè” (the evil power of priests), making each letter coincide with a number in the Ionic system. The sum total of these numbers was the prophetic figure of six hundred and sixty-six (666), the number of the beast referred to in the Book of Revelation (13:18). According to Pucci’s interpretation, the beast referred to by the apostle John—with two horns similar to those of a lamb, but with the voice of a dragon—was ecclesiastical power, which would subjugate the inhabitants of the earth by persuading them to worship the other beast, an image of the Roman Empire.<sup>135</sup> The reference was to the moment in history when temporal power and spiritual power ceased to be distinct and independent of each other, when Rome received temporal power from the hands of Emperor Constantine (an allusion to the so-called “Donation of Constantine”) and the ecclesiastical ministers became definitively corrupt by becoming administrators of temporal goods. The moment when Emperor Constantine took part in the Council of Nicea in 325 after converting to Christianity marked the start of the long reign of the

<sup>132</sup> On the Colloquy of Montbéliard, cf. *infra* Ch. vi. On the content of the work and the historical context in which it was conceived, see esp. M. Biagioni, “Introduzione,” to Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, 1–45.

<sup>133</sup> L. Firpo, “Francesco Pucci a Basilea,” 83.

<sup>134</sup> Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 23.

<sup>135</sup> *Informatione*, 125.

beast, a period of 1260 years in which the “evil power” (mala potestà) of the Roman hierarchy was destined to reign over the earth. Pucci’s calculation identified the period between 1580 and 1590 as the time when the reign of the beast would come to an end and “the Messiah will come to renew the age and assist His followers with His mighty arm.”<sup>136</sup> The return of Christ on earth was therefore imminent, marking the start of a long millennium during which he would chain up Satan, subjugate sects that propagated lies and establish a kingdom of peace and harmony.<sup>137</sup>

In his poem in octaves, *Del Regno di Christo*, probably written at around the same time as his conversion to Catholicism (1587), Pucci developed these reflections further, cleansing them, however, of the markedly anti-Roman overtones that had characterized the *Informatione*. He offered a free poetic reworking of the Book of Job and above all the Pentateuch, namely the first part of the Old Testament and the Jewish Bible containing the first five books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Jews were required to contemplate these narrative and normative texts constantly night and day, as explicitly suggested in the Book of Joshua, and Pucci made no mystery of the objective of his work: as he later explained in his dedication to Pope Clement VIII (1592–1605), it was to convert Muslims and Jews to Christianity in anticipation of the advent of the millennium—“I try to transform the people of Ishmael / and the degenerate children of Israel / from proud wolves into innocent lambs.”<sup>138</sup> The idea that the conversion of the Jews was a fundamental step along the path to the perfect society of the millennium soon became a leitmotif in Pucci’s work, as is shown by his so-called “Letter to the Jews”—which we will analyse in Chapter III—and the last work he drafted in Prague in the late 1580s, *De Regno Christi*, a lengthy manuscript presentation of 21 chapters that reiterated in Latin many of the themes already addressed in his poem in octaves, reiterating the anti-Roman polemical arguments that he had significantly toned down just two years previously.<sup>139</sup> As we will see in more detail in the next chapter,

<sup>136</sup> ‘Il Messia verrà a rinovare il secolo et a soccorrere, con braccio potente, a’ suoi divoti’; *ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 128–129.

<sup>138</sup> “Io cerco fargli d’Ismael le genti / e d’Israel la tralignata prole / di fieri lupi agnelletti innocenti;” Pucci, *Del Regno di Cristo*, Manuscript BAV, *Reginense latino* 1763, f. 1<sup>v</sup>. The dedication to Clement VIII, which is only present in the manuscript version of the work held in the Vatican Apostolic Library, was probably added in the early 1590s—after the first draft of the work—on the occasion of his long-planned trip to Rome. The other previously dated manuscript version of the work is held in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, *cod. Ital.* 1383.

<sup>139</sup> *De regno Christi* was probably drafted in 1589–1590, following *De praedestinatione*, a work that is mentioned on the first folio. The manuscript, dedicated to Cardinal

his decision to persist in faithfully reproposing his old doctrines even after his abjuration led to growing fresh hostility in Catholic circles in Prague. This Latin work faithfully restated the usual aspects of Pucci's millenarian thinking: the fall of Satan, the creation of man and woman, the original sin, the stories of Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David, the prophecies of Isaiah, Daniel and Jeremiah, the incarnation of the Son of God, Saint Paul's preaching, the corruption in the Church that could be dated back to Constantine's conversion, the interpretation of certain events—the supernova in 1572, the comet in 1578, Elizabeth's victory over Spain in 1588, the peace between the Turks and the Persians in 1589—as the fulfilment of the Sibylline prophecies, the need for a Council to bridge religious discord, the invitation to Jews and Muslims to convert, the identification of the papacy and the Curia as the seat of the Antichrist, the imminent coming of the millennial kingdom, the imprisonment of Satan and the Last Judgement scheduled for the end of the thousand-year period.

As previously mentioned, none of the three works written by Pucci in Prague in the second half of the 1580s was published, both because of their size (they were very long works) and the indifference and hostility (depending on the case) with which they were received. However, Pucci did not give up easily; rather than being discouraged by the rising opposition to him among the Catholic and Protestant authorities, he continued to move around late sixteenth-century Europe in search of environments and people that would listen to his religious proposal, above all in Henry IV's France. In 1592, he published his most famous work, *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, in Gouda, near Leiden, a slim volume dedicated to the universal efficacy of the benefit of Christ in which he summarized the content of his main manuscript works and vigorously reiterated the goodness of his religious proposal for the last time.<sup>140</sup> As we will see in detail in the last chapter, this work—which summarized the main themes of his anti-Roman polemic, his millenarian visions and his anti-predestinarian polemic—provoked the umpteenth polemical reaction from intellectuals and men of the Church of all confessions.

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Robert Bellarmine just as the previous work had been, is now held in Salzburg at the Archiepiscopal Archive; cf. L. Firpo, "Scritti," p. 39).

<sup>140</sup> F. Pucci, *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, Goudae, Typis Ioannis Zasseni Hoenii, 1592.

## Francesco Pucci in France during the First Wars of Religion

### 1 Lyons

The Rinuccinis, who hosted Francesco Pucci at the end of 1563, were one of the best-known families in the so-called Florentine colony (“nazione florentina”) in Lyons. Pucci immediately became part of the lively community of important merchants and businessmen, as well as a strong group of anti-Medici exiles made up of men and women seeking the freedom they had lost in their hometown in Lyons; they lived with the memory of Savonarolan and republican ideals in the hope that they might be able to reintroduce them into their beloved Florence one day. At the time, the French city was one of the main centres of European commerce; since the mid-fifteenth century, it had been a focal point of trade routes between the Italian peninsula, the Levant and the Empire. It soon became a leading marketplace for the foreign exchange market and trade in spices and luxury goods. The presence of major international trade fairs encouraged the circulation of goods and people, partly by virtue of different forms of privileges and exemptions. These privileges were extended to foreigners in 1538, but long before then Italian merchants and bankers had transferred significant parts of their business to the city. Many Italians moved to Lyons permanently—from Lucca, Milan, Venice and above all Florence—to open branch offices of the main Italian companies and credit institutions. Three quarters of imports in Lyons already came from the Italian peninsula in the mid-sixteenth century. Tuscan supremacy was linked on one hand to the silk market and a major intermediary role in trade in spices and other goods, and on the other hand to the foreign exchange market, in which they excelled thanks to their acquired expertise in the field of financial speculation through the practice of buying on credit and cash sales. The ‘Florentine nation’ set up in the 1460s—shortly after the 1463 Edict through which Louis XI allowed foreigners to participate in trade fairs in Lyons—increasingly stood out as an independent institution in administrative and legal terms towards the end of the century. However, the significant presence of Florentines was not only due to reasons of an economic or financial nature; as a result of the traditional political and military agreement between the Republic of Florence and France, many Florentine exiles saw Lyons as their ideal refuge. In particular, after the

Medicis returned to Florence in 1512, there was an increasingly close link between emigration and trade and credit work, also because the local communities had kept in touch with their Italian cities of origin, making it easier for their fellow citizens to arrive for political reasons too. The Florentines also returned the favour and welcome that Francis I gave them and always showed the greatest respect towards the French political authorities.<sup>1</sup>

Pucci felt in tune with this climate from the start. The “burning affection” (affezione ardente) which he had always shown “towards citizens who loved the common good and their homeland”<sup>2</sup> was strengthened even further by his contact with these exiles, who were both politically motivated and influenced by religious ideals. Indeed, he established lasting bonds of friendship with some of them, such as Jacopo Corbinelli, to whom we shall return later, and the Venetian humanist Giovanni Michele Bruto with his heterodox religious tendencies and anti-Medici political ideals, a man who Pucci encountered again in Krakow and Prague in the 1580s. The fact that their movements followed similar paths reflects their common destiny as exiles. Bruto was a close friend of Cardinal Reginald Pole and the Italo-Hungarian humanist Andrea Dudith Sbardellati, as well as a scholar of Greek and Latin literature and a former member of the Order of the Canons Regular. He had associated with the humanist group headed by Pole that met at the Benedictine abbey in Maguzzano on Lake Garda and was a friend of Pietro Carnesecchi, with whom he stayed in Venice “for about six months” in the early 1560s together with the heretic Giorgio Filalete, known as “il Turchetto” (“the little Turk”). He was summoned by the Holy Office in Venice on numerous occasions between 1562 and 1565. His desire to escape trial led him to the safer surroundings of Lyons, where he remained for seven years until 1572, establishing very close ties with

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the Italian community living in Lyons in those years, in addition to the classic E. Picot, *Les Français italienisants au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1906–1907), see J. Boucher, *Du milieu du XV à la fin du XVI siècle* (Lyons, 1994), 94–97 and 153–167; J.-F. Dubost, *La France italienne XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, (Paris, 1997), 53 ff. and 164 ff.; and H. Heller, *Anti-Italianism in Sixteenth-Century France* (Toronto Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2003), esp. 28–50. More recently, cf. G. Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell’eresia. Ambrogio Catarino Politi (1484–1553)* (Florence, Olschki, 2007), 53–68; and S. Dall’Aglio, *Savonarola in Francia. Circolazione di un’eredità politico-religiosa nell’Europa del Cinquecento* (Turin, Aragno, 2006), 84–112.

<sup>2</sup> “Verso i cittadini amanti del ben comune e della loro patria;” letter to Pope Clement VIII, Amsterdam, August 5th, 1592, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 114–120: 115. The letter has been published also in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 141–149: 142.

the community of Florentine exiles who, just a few years before, had urged him to write and publish his *Historiae Florentinae* (1562).<sup>3</sup>

Pucci probably also met Jacopo Brocardo in Lyons. This prophet, who modelled himself directly on Savonarola, had come to France at the end of the 1560s to flee from the Venetian Inquisition. Having proclaimed himself to be the depository of the revelation of some of the most secret divine *arcana*, he announced that Christ was about to descend to this world, where he would create a kingdom of peace and justice, organized democratically according to the Presbyterian model with a system of free evangelical councils.<sup>4</sup> These exciting ideas must have affected Pucci, as he adopted them almost in their entirety a few years later. It cannot be excluded that Pucci was referring to his encounter with this bizarre prophet when he wrote of the “predictions made about myself by certain spiritual persons, who [...] foresaw that one day the Lord would use me in His Church for some important enterprise.”<sup>5</sup>

The well-stocked shelves of the bookshops in Lyons allowed Pucci to access the wealth of literature in the field of Italian and European religious dissent. He probably rediscovered some of Gelli’s more explicitly heterodox works, such as *Capricci del bottaio*, which had already been condemned by the Venetian Index in 1554 and republished in Lyons in 1566 under the title *Discourses fantastiques*

3 Evidence of Bruto’s anti-Medicean republicanism is his contribution to the new publication of Donato Giannotti’s *Libro della Repubblica de’ Veneziani*. On Bruto it suffices to refer to the bibliographical entry included in *The Italian Reformation*, 148–150, to which we can add the recent article by A. Cagnolati, “Giovanni Michele Bruto e l’educazione femminile: *La Institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente* (1555),” *Annali Università di Ferrara*, sez. III: Filosofia, Discussion paper number 64 (2001).

4 On this Piedmontese prophet who reveals many similarities with Francesco Pucci, see D. Cantimori, “Visioni e speranze di un ugonotto italiano,” *Rivista storica italiana* 62 (1950), 199–217; A. Rotondò, *sub voce*, DBI, 14, 384–389; J. Moltmann, “Jacob Brocard als Vorläufer der Reich-Gottestheologie und der symbolisch-prophetischen Schriftauslegung des Johann Cocceius,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 71 (1960), 110–129; M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages. A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969), 494–499; R.L. Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days. The Theme of the “Two Witnesses” in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York-Oxford, 1993) 162–165; Marion L. Kuntz, *The Anointment of Dionisio. Prophecy and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 119–126; F. Ambrosini, *L’eresia di Isabella. Vita di Isabella da Passano, signora della Frattina 1542–1601* (Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2005), *ad indicem*; and now E. Lurgo, “Nouveau Saint Paul’ ou ‘Trompette de Satan?’ Le prophète Iacopo Brocardo,” *Revue d’Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses* 92 (2012), 445–463; 93 (2013), 203–221.

5 “Predizioni fatte sopra di me da persone spirituali, che hanno [...] antivisto che un giorno il Signore si serviria di me nella sua Chiesa a qualche segnalata impresa,” letter to Pope Clement VIII, 142–143.

de *Iustin tonnellier*,<sup>6</sup> and the well-known anti-Roman version of the *Sonetti, canzoni et trionphi di messer Francesco Petrarca*, edited by Antonio Brucioli, an exile in Venice,<sup>7</sup> as well as various heterodox writings by Juan de Valdés, Pietro Martire Vermigli and Andrea Dudith Sbardellati, to mention but a few.<sup>8</sup> The years that Pucci spent in Lyons were also marked by a decisive turning point in the history of religion in the sixteenth century. When the typographer Claude Senneton published the French edition of *Cent et dix consyderations divines* by Valdés, translated together with Curione's preface by the Breton Huguenot Claude de Kerquefinen (1563), the Reformed authorities regarded it with some suspicion and quickly supplemented the text with marginal notes. These were added to reiterate the centrality of the doctrine of predestination and prevent any individualistic interpretation of the principle of the inward illumination of the Spirit.<sup>9</sup> However, these precautions were not sufficient to set the minds of the worried theologians in Geneva at rest and Calvin himself later stepped in to rebuke the reckless printer of Lyons.<sup>10</sup> This alarm bell was a forewarning of the harsh attack launched just two years later against Andrien Gorin, a pastor at

6 The book was edited by the Breton Huguenot Jean Claude de Kerquefinen, on whom see S.F. Baridon, *Claude de Kerquefinen, italianisant et hérétique* (Geneva, Droz, 1954), esp. 20–22 on Gelli's work. The *Capricci del bottaio* had been published by Torrentino in 1548 and again in 1549 and 1551, and three more times in Venice between 1550 and 1551, before being condemned in 1554 by the Venetian Index.

7 These sonnets were republished three times in Lyons during the 1550s (in 1550, 1551 and 1558). For Brucioli's explicit anti-Roman interpretation see, for example, his comment to sonnets 136–138, those in which Petrarch commenting on the pope's exile in Avignon had expressed his desire to bring him back to Rome: Brucioli changed them into a violent anti-Roman polemic; see W.J. Kennedy, *Authorizing Petrarch* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1994), 68, 73–75; more generally, on Petrarch's reception in the sixteenth-century, see *Petrarch and his Readers in the Renaissance*, ed. by K.A.E. Enenkel and J. Papy (Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2006). In the 1580s, in Basel, Pucci would have encountered Petrarca's verse again: in 1582 Ludovico Castelvetro published (with the printer Pietro de Sedabonis) *Le rime del Petrarca brevemente sposte*, where he pointed out as his favourite models the work of Saint Augustine and other Fathers of the Church, and some parts of the Sacred Scriptures, such as Psalms and the *Ecclesiastes* (Kennedy, *Authorizing Petrarch*, 79).

8 On some of these works, see M. Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo a San Lorenzo. Eresia, politica e cultura nella Firenze di Cosimo I* (Turin, Einaudi, 1997), 189. On the relationship between Pucci and Dudith, see *infra*, ch. v.

9 Cf. Baridon, *Claude de Kerquefinen*, footnote 2, pp. 23–24; M. Firpo, "Introduzione," to J. de Valdés, *Alfabeto Cristiano e altri scritti* (Turin, Einaudi, 1994), CXXXVIII.

10 J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *Juan de Valdés réformateur en Espagne et en Italie* (Geneva, Droz, 1969) 63 ff.; M. Firpo, *Tra alumbrados e 'spirituali'. Studi su Juan de Valdés e la crisi religiosa italiana del Cinquecento* (Florence, Olschki, 1990), 114 ff.; idem, "Introduzione," CXL.

the French Reformed Church in Emden, who was guilty of translating Valdés's *Cento e dieci divine considerazioni* into Flemish for publication. In this case, the venerable Company of Pastors in Geneva and Théodore de Bèze strongly encouraged the Churches of East Frisia to punish the "scandalous" Gorin in a suitable manner. The condemnation of Valdés was the inevitable consequence of an onslaught that now extended beyond the austere city of Geneva. In the same year that Claude de Kerquefinen printed the French edition of Valdés's works, Bernardino Ochino's *Dialogi triginta* was published. This work lauding religious tolerance was explicitly directed against the Swiss Churches' process of authoritarian involution, elegantly translated into Latin by Sebastian Castellio of Savoy for the publisher Pietro Perna.<sup>11</sup> It is worth highlighting that Castellio had been through a long and bitter polemic against Théodore de Bèze concerning a Latin translation of the Holy Scriptures, whose final dramatic act was played out in the early 1560s. He had also just published *Conseil à la France désolée* and was beginning to distribute the manuscript of his well-known *Dialogi quatuor* among his most faithful supporters.<sup>12</sup> These texts collected the most accomplished products of a tradition that praised religious individualism and freedom of conscience, and were therefore bound to clash with Swiss orthodoxy. Just as the editions of Valdés's works had aroused the suspicions of the Swiss theologians, leading to attacks, Bernardino Ochino was compelled to leave the city of Zurich hastily to take refuge among the Polish anti-Trinitarians and Moravian Anabaptists. Sebastian Castellio also came under harsh attack from the physician Adam Bodenstein in the same year, 1563, and was only saved from serious accusations of heresy (such as being the translator of *Dialogi triginta*) by his timely death. The beheading of the heretical anti-Trinitarian Valentino Gentile in Berne in 1566 marked the height of this repression. The years of Pucci's stay in Lyons therefore coincided with the final realisation on the part of the Italian and Spanish religious exiles that dialogue with the Reformed authorities was impossible. While the demise of Michael Servetus at the stake in Geneva in 1553 had been a dramatic indication of this lack of communication, the beheading of Valentino Gentile provided definitive confirmation that there was no longer any margin for discussion.

<sup>11</sup> See now M. Firpo, "Boni christiani merito vocantur haeretici". Bernardino Ochino e la tolleranza," in *La formazione storica dell'alterità. Studi di storia della tolleranza nell'età moderna offerti a Antonio Rotondò*, promoted by Henry Méchoulan, Richard H. Popkin, Giuseppe Ricuperati, Luisa Simonutti, 3 vols., I, sec. XVI (Florence, Olschki, 2001), 161–244.

<sup>12</sup> The reference is to H.R. Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio, 1515–1563. Humanist and Defender of Religious Toleration in a Confessional Age* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003; first German edition, 1997).

Pucci's stay in Lyons also had a decisive effect on his life story because he had his first direct contact with doctrinal controversies and polemics. He decided to abandon business and devote himself entirely to his studies and the search for "divine truth". Lyons was bubbling with life in the early 1560s; the population had increased to sixty thousand and wholesale production and annual fairs made its market one of the most dynamic centres of European trade. Protestantism had spread rapidly from the 1540s onwards, finally involving about one third of the city's inhabitants, and at the peak of its expansion, in 1562, a victorious Calvinist revolt put the city in the hands of the Reformed Church. For about a year, the Catholic churches were held hostage by the Protestant militias and the population of Lyons had no choice but to follow their faith. A few months after the Edict of Amboise (13 March 1563), the city reverted to royal authority, but it was only with some difficulty that the Catholics regained possession of their property and places of worship. The Jesuit Edmond Auger managed to say Mass again in the Church of Saint Jean (13 July) and in autumn 1563 Antonio Possevino, a Jesuit who had given the Lent sermons the year before, also returned to Lyons. However, as the Edict also authorized Reformed worship in strongholds such as Lyons that were in the hands of the Protestants at the time, the city was destined for a difficult period of co-habitation.<sup>13</sup> When Pucci arrived in Lyons, he was thrown into a

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<sup>13</sup> On Lyons, in addition to the essays by N. Zemon Davis collected in *eadem, Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1975), esp. ch. I–II, see now O. Christin, "Un royaume en paix (1563–1567)? Tolérance, pacification et parité confessionnelle à Lyon," in *Sociétés et Idéologies des Temps Modernes. Hommage à Arlette Jouanna*, 2 vols. (Montpellier 1996), I, 303–322; idem, *La paix de religion. L'autonomisation de la raison politique au XVI siècle* (Paris, Seuil, 1997), 96–97; and F. Kirchner, *Entre deux guerres 1563–1567. Essai sur la tentative d'application à Lyon de la politique de «Tolérance»* (Lyons, D.E.S., 1952). For a general overview, see the still useful volume by A. Aeschimann, *Les origines et le développement de la Réforme à Lyon* (Lyons, Impr. nouvelle lyonnaise, 1916). For the cosmopolitan character of the city, see J. Wadsworth, *Lyons 1473–1503. The Beginning of Cosmopolitanism* (Cambridge Ma., The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1962). On Viret and Possevino in Lyons, still useful are the old biographies by J. Barnaud, *Pierre Viret. Sa vie et son oeuvre 1511–1571* (Nieuwkoop, De Graaf, 1973; reprint of the first edition, Saint-Amans, G. Carayol, 1911), esp. 581 ff.; and J. Dorigny, *Vie du P. Antoine Possevin* (Paris, Muzier, 1712), 101 ff.; but see also P.F. Geisendorf, "Pierre Viret à Lyon," *Cahiers protestants* 45 (1964), 244–262, and M. Venard, "L'apostolat du P. Antonio Possevino en France (1562–1570)," in *Les Jésuites parmi les hommes aux XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, ed. by G. and G. Demerson (Clemont-Ferrand, Association des publications de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, 1987), 245–56. On Auger and his "French mission", see A. Lynn Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit Politicians* (Geneva, Droz, 1973), and, more generally, the entry by the same author, "Emond Auger," in A. Jouanna,

situation marked by everyday violent clashes that often took place before the helpless eyes of the ecclesiastical authorities. It is not difficult to imagine him carefully following the development of religious events, attracted by the long series of doctrinal disputes after his arrival. There were frequent clashes—although at a distance—between Pierre Viret and a trio made up of Edmond Auger, Antonio Possevino and the Minim friar Jean Rospitel about the main issues in religious polemics at the time. Pucci served his religious apprenticeship through their fiery controversialist pamphlets and the frequent disputes that enlivened the Lyons streets. As he stated some years later, he learnt to “examine freely, one by one, the particular sentences that have been and still are controversial, with the intention of focusing on the conclusions where I found and felt the characteristics and marks of divine truth.”<sup>14</sup> “This examination” was carried out (again in his words) *“carte blanche*, without any prejudice, in order not to prevent the good inspiration that might come to me from the Heavenly Father”.<sup>15</sup> Pucci does not seem to have been particularly concerned about choosing one side or the other, even though, as we shall see, he continued to consider himself a faithful follower of the Holy Mother Church until 1572. What most interested him was the opportunity to learn to listen to the “good inspiration” that he received from above, while observing the controversies that enlivened contemporary religious life in Lyons with an open mind.<sup>16</sup>

The question of the Eucharist was undoubtedly one of the most heated matters in the religious controversy in those months and years. It started when, shortly after his arrival in Lyons, Possevino began to distribute a short but fervent work about Mass. A few weeks later, Pierre Viret prepared a reply—*Cauteles et canons de la messe*. This text was taken from a 1554 publication (*Des actes des vrais successeurs de Jésus-Christ*) in which he denounced the idolatry of the Catholic rite. The following months saw the Jesuit Edmond Auger join the polemic, which showed no sign of stopping. The question of the Eucharist was still under discussion three years later, in spring 1566, although the protagonists had changed in the meantime; Théodore de Bèze, Calvin’s successor,

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J. Boucher, et al., eds., *Histoire et dictionnaire des Guerres de Religion* (Paris, Robert Laffont, 1998), 683–686.

<sup>14</sup> “Being persuaded—the paragraph continued—that lovers of God and truth are able to find significant differences when they compare specific results within a conflicting judgment without any prejudice and with the aim to avoid the false” (“Essendo persuaso che notabil differenza sia trovata dagli amatori di Dio e del vero in generale, quando essi paragonano le conclusioni particolari in giudizio contraddittorio, senza alcun pregiudizio, per ischivare il falso”); cf. Pucci, letter to Pope Clement VIII, 143.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

now opposed two virtually unknown members of the Italian Reformed community, the jurist Alamanni and the Florentine Piero Capponi, who was a member of the anti-Medici family of rich merchants and bankers that had moved to Lyons at the turn of the century.<sup>17</sup> Théodore de Bèze had described them as curious spirits, *irrequieta ingenia*, who disliked doctrinal subtleties in a letter to Bullinger in 1564, encouraging him to send Girolamo Zanchi, the pastor of Chiavenna, to the community in Lyons “to keep their audacity under control”.<sup>18</sup> The controversy hinged on the presence of the body of Christ in the Communion rite. Taking Zwingli’s symbolic understanding of the Last Supper to its extreme consequences, Alamanni denied that the soul had any communication with Christ except in a purely spiritual sense, maintaining that one could not speak in any way (not spiritually or, even less so, materially) of the presence of the body of Christ at the Supper. The diffident and stern de Bèze was inevitably displeased by the doctrinal positions of his two Italian counterparts, but was more concerned by other matters. He felt that the most worrying aspects of Alamanni and Capponi’s religious proposal—besides their specifically theological positions—were their shameless refusal to recognize the authority of the “masters of the Church”, their frequent appeals to the “pure truth of God”, their repeated statements that they rejected all the doctrinal “quibbles and cavils” that were typical of the established Churches, their claim to be the depositories of incomprehensible divine secrets and the way that they presented their work as the faithful realization of unconfessable divine prophecies. This lesson in doctrinal explicitness, together with its intense Savonarola-style millenarian prophetism, must have left a lasting mark on the memory of Francesco Pucci, who probably observed the dispute attentively. Indeed, Pucci subsequently put to use the lesson learnt in Lyons during his violent clash against the Consistory of the French Church in London between January and May 1575.

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<sup>17</sup> The event has been known since Cantimori’s *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento e altri scritti*, ed. by A. Prosperi (Turin, Einaudi, 1992; first edition, 1939), 268–271, and especially since H. Meylan, “Bèze et les italiens de Lyon (1566),” in *Mélanges Augustin Renaudet, Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 14 (1952), 235–249. On Capponi’s family in Lyons see Charpin-Feugerolles, *Les Florentins à Lyon* (Lyons, Association typographique, 1889), 300 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Meylan, “Bèze et les italiens de Lyon,” 240.

## 2 Paris and Its Environs. Among Florentine Exiles and Utopian Projects

While still in Lyons in 1570, Pucci decided to “forsake the daily traffic and business of his world and to devote himself mainly to contemplation and to the study of all things celestial and eternal.”<sup>19</sup> The acceptance of the existence of infinite “discord and disagreements [that] exist in this world between one religion and another religion and between one Church and another Church” did not discourage him, but rather prompted him to continue the “unbiased examination” of religious controversies that he had been conducting for several years. The death of his uncle Giambonelli on 23 March 1570 unexpectedly left him with a sizeable inheritance and gave him the chance to fulfil all of his desires. After completing the necessary formalities in Florence, Pucci decided to use this large sum of money to serve his personal spiritual mission. His first step was to move to Paris. As he wrote some years later, “I chose to wander at my own expense in a kingdom and city that was free and renowned for its theology faculty, namely Paris.” In the French capital, “where I arrived in 1571 and stayed for one year,” he pursued his incessant desire to provide explanations (“seeking to clear things up”). Until that moment, Pucci had never seriously questioned his Catholic faith. The disputes and controversies he had witnessed had undoubtedly put him on his guard against the perils of following a faith dogmatically, and the example of the free Italian spirits encountered in Lyons had encouraged him to carry out a search for truth without any prejudice or institutional affinity. However, nothing that happened in those years prompted him to reject the faith in which he had been brought up, a choice that must have been influenced by the Jesuit Antonio Possevino. After staying in Lyons in February 1562 during the Huguenot occupation, Possevino returned to support Edmond Auger’s evangelizing work in October 1563, coinciding precisely with Pucci’s arrival.<sup>20</sup> The Jesuit still gratefully remembered how the leading figures in the Florentine community had freed him from the clutches of the

<sup>19</sup> In his famous letter to Pope Clement VIII he would have written of that “personal decision taken for God’s grace in Lyons during the 27th year of my life” (“risoluzione fatta da me per grazia di Dio, l’anno 27 della mia vita [ovvero il 1570], in Lione”); Pucci, letter to Pope Clement VIII, 143.

<sup>20</sup> Alexis Mourre, author of a recent intelligent novel entitled *Francesco Pucci herétique* (Paris, L’Harmattan, 2002), used this coincidence as an excuse to imagine that Pucci and Possevino joined together for an adventurous journey from Florence to Lyons: a starting point for a long lasting friendship.

French Huguenots the year before,<sup>21</sup> giving him a further reason to devote all his attention to the numerous Italian families in the city, particularly those from Florence. The Jesuit's success among the Italian merchants in Lyons was directly proportional to the sensitivity he showed towards them, not only with regard to the religious aspects of their tiring daily lives, but also concerning the delicate moral questions raised by their trading; Possevino devoted a year of his life to learning the language and economic and financial problems experienced by the merchants in Lyons, interacting with them and studying everything available on the subject.<sup>22</sup> Despite his steadfast opposition to all forms of usury, it seems that his initiative won favour among the Florentines, also thanks to the support of two particularly influential figures, Lorenzo Capponi, a rich merchant who had been a Lyons resident for over forty years, and Rinuccini, the renowned consul of the Florentine nation, at whose bank Pucci was employed.<sup>23</sup> It is therefore easy to imagine that Pucci came into frequent contact with Possevino and became his close and trusted friend. It was probably through Possevino, for example, that Pucci first met Niccolò Balbani, an Italian exile from Lucca who, as a Calvinist convert, had been sent to Lyons by the Geneva authorities specifically to counter the success of the Jesuit's preaching. Indeed, it was against Balbani, who in the meantime had become a minister of the Italian Church in Geneva, that Pucci later directed one of his most violent polemical attacks, possibly in the name of his long-standing friendship with Possevino.<sup>24</sup>

However, Pucci's loyalty to Rome began to waver in Paris; the horrors of the night of St Bartholomew haunted him as if they were a terrible confirma-

<sup>21</sup> G. de Groë, *Réforme et Contre-réforme en France. Le collège de la Trinité au XVI siècle à Lyon* (Paris, Publisud, 1995), 82, who refers in his footnotes to Possevino's *Mémoires inédits* conserved in the ARSI (Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu); L. Balsamo, *Antonio Possevino S.I. bibliografo della Controriforma e diffusione della sua opera in area anglicana* (Florence, Olschki, 2006), 23. On the Jesuits' presence in Lyons, see also Y. Lignereux, "Une implantation difficile: controverse religieuse et polémiques politiques (1565–1607)," in *Les jésuites à Lyon XVI<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, sous la direction d'Etienne Fouilloux et Bernard Hours (Paris, ENS Editions, 2005), 17–36.

<sup>22</sup> De Groë, *Réforme*, 85.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>24</sup> On Balbani, see the entry by C. Ginzburg, in DBI, 5, 336–342; on Balbani's opposition to Possevino's preaching see De Groë, *Réforme*, 82. Pucci's letter is published in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, pp. 23–54. Pucci and Possevino probably met again in the 1580s in Cracow, where the Jesuit stopped over a few times during his long journeys to Moscow and Prague, on his way to the court of Rudolph II during the years 1587–88 (Balsamo, *Antonio Possevino*, 27; and De Groë, *Réforme*, 182, who points out Possevino's stay in Prague in those years).

tion of the accusations which he had repeatedly heard from the “ultramontane sects against the Church of Rome” in those months. This time, Pucci no longer had Antonio Possevino, who had stayed in Lyons, by his side to help and support him. It is likely though that not even the public disapproval that marked the Jesuit’s reactions to the tragic events of those months, when many Huguenots were offered refuge in the Chapel of the College of the Trinity in Lyons (where Possevino had been Rector for a year),<sup>25</sup> would have been enough to keep Pucci in the Catholic fold. His sympathies for the victims of this massacre were the reason why he started to approach the Calvinist faith. However, his conversion to Protestantism<sup>26</sup> did not last long: “Soon,” he wrote, “I found [the Calvinists] to be devoid of all charity and fair-mindedness and I had ongoing disputes with them both in that kingdom and in others.”<sup>27</sup> His support of the Calvinists was destined to last just long enough to get over the trauma of that terrible slaughter. This was the beginning of a “wearingy journey lasting fourteen years” that would take him to the most important cities in Europe—London, Oxford, Paris, Basle, Krakow and Prague—before finally returning to France and setting out on his last, tragic journey to Rome, where he was sentenced to death. During these extensive travels in Europe, he made a name for himself as a fervent supporter of free and direct divine inspiration in every believer, using every possible means to oppose the dogmatic and disciplinary rigidity of the established Churches, above all the Reformed Churches. When he reached London—the first step in his protracted wanderings—he was first welcomed (on 10 September 1572) into the Church of Italian exiles in London<sup>28</sup> and then expelled, after being accused of professing Pelagian

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 116–117.

<sup>26</sup> Pucci himself has set his conversion in relation to the horror of Saint Bartholomew’s massacre in a significant autobiographical paragraph of his well-known letter to Pope Clement VIII: “I was sufficiently convinced by the ultramontane sects against the Church of Rome. Hence, when the horrible killing in 1572 happened, I started crying while listening to the preachers and could not avoid crossing over and continuing my learning on the other side” (“Trovandomi alquanto mosso dalle oltramontane sètte contra la Chiesa di Roma. Onde, sopravvenendo l’orribile uccisione dell’anno ’72, non mi potetti tenere ch’io non passassi, in piangere ad udire predicatori, dalla altra parte, e ivi continuare il mio cominciato studio”); letter to Pope Clement VIII, 144.

<sup>27</sup> In a self-exculpatory paragraph of the same letter Pucci added those worlds: “God’s spirit never let me err implicitly or explicitly against the Church of Rome, nor forced me to adhere to the sects through marriages or proposal of any reward” (“Non avendo lo spirito di Dio lassatomi mai errare implicitamente ed esplicitamente contra la Chiesa catolica, né obliga[tomi] alle sètte, [...] né per maritaggi, né per premi propostimi”); *ibid.*, 144.

<sup>28</sup> Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 115.

doctrines by the University of Oxford, where he obtained a *magister artium* degree on 18 May 1574. He was then involved in a protracted controversy with the Consistory of the French Church, which had been skilfully reconstructed by Antonio Rotondò.<sup>29</sup> Faced with the Consistory's stern rebuke requiring him to submit to the authority of the Church—its members ruled: “the extraordinary gift of prophecy having ceased in the Church” (“le don de prophétie extraordinaire estant cessé en l’Église”),<sup>30</sup> echoing the words used a few years before by Théodore de Bèze in the Lyons controversy—the Florentine exile openly demanded complete freedom of speech for every member of the community, a freedom founded on the presumption that the Holy Spirit inspired each believer directly. The Italians in Lyons therefore seemed to have found a new powerful voice through Pucci’s fiery words, raging against the authoritarian presumptuousness of the ecclesiastical institutions and claiming that direct divine inspiration had revealed the secrets of the Holy Scriptures.

When Pucci decided to leave England soon after this violent clash, his chosen destination was once again Paris.<sup>31</sup> His friendship with the Florentine exiles in France was as solid as ever and this second brief stay in Paris, from December 1576 to May 1577, offered him the opportunity to strengthen old friendships. A letter to Grand Duke Francis I from Sinolfo Saracini, the Tuscan ambassador to France, written a few months later in July 1578 in Paris, when Pucci had moved to Basle, throws retrospective light on the nature of this friendship and these contacts, providing an important testimony to the political and literary projects which Pucci shared with his compatriots in those years:

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29 Rotondò, “Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra e i primi scritti teologici di Francesco Pucci,” in idem, *Studi e ricerche di storia eretica* (Turin, Giappichelli, 1974), 225–271 (from which I quote in the following paragraphs), now republished in Id., *Studi di storia eretica del Cinquecento*, 2 vols. (Florence, Olschki, 2008), 2, 577–615.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 243. In his letter to Johann Jacob Grynaeus, a theologian from Basel, published by Rotondò in the appendix of his article (*ibid.*, pp. 514–527), Pucci alluded to “nonnullas disputationes” concerning prophecy, held privately with the minister of the French Church in London Pierre Loiseleur de Villiers “et nonnullis aliis” (cf. also *ibid.*, p. 242). On Loiseleur de Villiers, see I. Backus, “Pierre l’Oiseleur’s Connections with England in the Sixteenth Century,” *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London* 22 (1975), 441–448.

31 In December 1576 Pucci was again in Paris (he writes a letter to Girolamo Gerini), staying until the first days of May 1577 when he left for Basel. The following letters written by Pucci from Paris are dated January 18th, February 14th and April 8th, 1577; but his first letter after the Parisian ones is dated January 1578 and is written from Frankfurt (cf. Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 17 ff.).

As he [“Busini”, one of Saracini’s informers] had understood that [Girolami and Corbinelli] were producing a document with the addition of I know not what declaration by Lorenzino about the death of Duke Alexander, God bless his name, [...] I thought fit nonetheless to send it and to make known at the same time their evil intention, not omitting to say that I hear from Busini himself that they will continue in the same style to perpetuate some of Grand Duke Cosimo’s deeds, long may we remember him, and intend to have this work printed in Basle with the help and support of a certain Francesco Pucci, whose ways are not unlike those rascals’ habits and who is there because of his heretical leanings.<sup>32</sup>

The plan for the posthumous publication of Lorenzino de’ Medici’s *Apologia del tirannicidio*, drafted soon after the murder of the Duke of Florence Alessandro de’ Medici,<sup>33</sup> was part of a wider publishing project which included, among

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32 The paragraph preceding those quoted in the text reads: “Having been told by Busini that Girolami and Corbinelli were working on some writing, consistent with their wicked minds. He did not want me to write about that to Your Highness, hoping to be able in the meanwhile to collect some more information” («Avendomi già conferito il Busini che il Girolami et il Corbinello fabricavano no so che scrittura, conforme alla loro scelerata mente, non volse che io ne scrivessi a Vostra Altezza allora, sperando intanto di poterne avere qualche lume particolare»); ASF (Firenze, Archivio di Stato), *Mediceo del Principato*, filza 4608, cc. 108r–v; the writing which is mentioned in the letter does not appear in the documentation preserved in Florence. The letter has been partially published by D. Caccamo, *Eretici italiani in Moravia, Polonia, Transilvania 1558–1611* (Florence, Le Lettere, 1999; first edition, 1970), foreword to the second edition, XIII. On Bernardo Girolami, a Florentine exile closely linked to Pietro Strozzi since the battle of Montemurlo, a member of Caterina de’ Medici’s French court since the mid-1560s, banished as a rebel by Cosimo I in 1574, victim of a deadly attack from an assassin hired by Picchena and Saracini on November 1578, see S. Calonaci, “Girolami, Bernardo,” DBI, 56, 514–515. On Corbinelli, see *infra* footnote 36.

33 Lorenzino de’ Medici, *Apologia e Lettere*, ed. by F. Erspamer (Rome, Salerno, 1991). On the story of this book and above all on its author, see now S. Dall’Aglio, *L’assassino del duca. Esilio e morte di Lorenzino de’ Medici* (Florence, Olschki, 2011). It is worth noting to this end the explicit reference to the *Apologia* made by Corbinelli in a letter sent to Pinelli on September 7th 1578: “I ended up with a manuscript composition by Lorenzino de’ Medici, the τυραννοκτόνος, in which the author justifies that event purely and with elegance; because Your Lordship is the keeper of all the most beautiful things, I did not want to send it to you before you asked for it; in any case, it’s worthy of you” (“Et mi è venuto alle mani d’un luogo unico una scrittura di Lorenzino de’ Medici, il τυραννοκτόνος, scritta di sua mano, dove lui giustifica quel fatto puramente et con elegantia, ma perché V.S. è l’armario di tutte le cose belle, io non gliene ho voluto mandare se la non me lo chiede prima; è cosa degna di lei”); after this letter Corbinelli sent him a manuscript

other things, Donato Giannotti's *Repubblica fiorentina*.<sup>34</sup> This plan came to fruition thanks to the efforts of the Florentine exile Jacopo Corbinelli in times dominated by an atmosphere of suspicion and intimidation around the leading figures in the ideal Florentine republic in exile, who were constantly threatened by Medici assassins. The atmosphere was heightened by the appointment of the new Tuscan ambassador, Sinolfo Saracini from Siena, on 26 June 1576. Saracini was chosen by Grand Duke Francis to replace Vincenzo Alamanni for the express purpose of speeding up the elimination of Tuscan political exiles residing in France. There was one murder after another in France in 1577 and 1578, with the Medici-sanctioned assassination of numerous exiles, including Francesco Alamanni, Antonio Capponi and the well-known figure Troilo Orsini, who was killed in Paris by Stefano Caraccioli, one of the Grand Duke's hired assassins.<sup>35</sup> In this atmosphere of intimidation, Corbinelli decided that the Florentines should readopt certain anti-tyrannical ideals that the French Huguenots had placed at the centre of their political thinking in the same years with Etienne de La Boétie, Innocent Gentiller and François Hotman (all of these authors were known and appreciated by Corbinelli). It was Corbinelli's intention to rework the arguments of the anti-Machiavellian and anti-Italian

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copy of the work suggesting him to preserve it as a precious good and advising him not to make any other copy; R. Calderini De Marchi, *Jacopo Corbinelli et les érudits français d'après la correspondance inédite Corbinelli-Pinelli 1566–1587* (Milan, Hoepli, 1914), 216. The hypothesis proposed many years ago by Calderini regarding Corbinelli's will to publish the manuscript is thus now confirmed by Saracini's letter quoted in the text, a document which precedes Corbinelli's letter to Pinelli.

34 More generally on Italian exiles in sixteenth-century France, see the recent article by P. Carta, "I fuorusciti italiani e l'antimachiavellismo francese del '500," *Il Pensiero Politico*, 36 (2003), 213–238, published also in French with the title "Les exilés italiens et l'antimachiavéisme français au XVI siècle," *Laboratoire italien. Politique et société* 3 (2002), 93–117. More generally, on these issues, in addition to S. Mastellone, *Venalità e machiavellismo in Francia: 1572–1610* (Florence, Olschki, 1972), and the important works by Anna Maria Battista now collected in eadem, *Politica e morale nella Francia dell'età moderna*, ed. by A. Lazzarino del Grosso (Genoa, Name, 1998), esp. 75–107, see also L. Sozzi, "La polémique anti-italienne en France au XVI siècle," in *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, 189 (1972), 90–190, and now Heller, *Anti-Italianism*, 160 et seq.

35 *Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane. Documents recueillis par G. Canestrini et publiés par A. Desjardins*, v. 4 (Paris, 1865); P. Simoncelli, *Il cavaliere dimezzato. Paolo del Rosso fiorentino e letterato* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1990), 181–198; M. Plaisance, "Les florentins en France sous le regard de l'autre: 1574–1578," in *L'image de l'autre européen XV–XVII siècles*, études recueillies par J. Dufournet, A.C. Fiorato, A. Redondo (Paris, Presses de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 1992), 147–157.

polemics of French Huguenot treatises, adapting them as tools in a direct polemic against exiles who seemed resigned and willing to bow down to the victory of the tyrannical Medicis.<sup>36</sup> Nothing could have been more suited to this purpose than printing the manuscript *Apologia del tirannicidio* ('Apology for a Murder'). Apart from fully justifying the political and moral lawfulness of assassination, the text contained a harsh accusation against the Florentine exiles. According to Lorenzino—who was intent on rejecting out of hand the numerous accusations against him after the murder of Alessandro de' Medici—they were really responsible for the political failure of his act, since they had been unable to take due advantage, sensationaly missing the opportunity to incite the people of Florence to revolt. Presenting this accusation again in the context of contemporary France therefore seemed to be both a clear invitation to his companions in exile to rebel against the climate of intimidation imposed by Grand Duke Francis and a message to those at home who were more willing to listen that they should not consider the battle definitively over.

As Saracini pointed out, Pucci was called upon to play an important role in this project in the field of publishing and politics. He had probably met Corbinelli in Lyons in the late 1560s and it is equally likely that the latter discussed joint projects and ambitions with him during his last stay in Paris in 1576–77. In Lyons in 1568, while fleeing from a summons to appear in court issued by the magistracy of the "Otto di guardia e di balia", Jacopo had joined his brother Bernardo, who had been banished from Florence in 1559 following Pandolfo Pucci's plot against Cosimo I.<sup>37</sup> Pucci and Corbinelli probably mixed in the same circles, as they were both involved—although perhaps in different degrees and ways—in the lively, thriving Florentine community in Lyons with its active business and commerce sector and unflagging devotion to the memory of Savonarola and the Republic. Pucci first heard about the plan when

36 To this end see Plaisance's sharp observations on Corbinelli's adherence to Gentillet's anti-Machiavellian and anti-Florentine invective ("Les florentins en France," 153). More generally see also Carta, *I fuorusciti italiani*, 229–230. On Corbinelli, in addition to the already quoted study by R. Calderini De Marchi, see P. Rajna, "Jacopo Corbinelli e la strage di San Bartolomeo," *Archivio storico italiano* 21 (1898), 54–103; G. Cardascia, "Un lecteur de Machiavel à la cour de France: Jacopo Corbinelli," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 40 (1938), 446–52; G. Benzoni's entry in DBI, 28, 750–760; G. Procacci, *Machiavelli nella cultura europea dell'età moderna* (Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1995), ad indicem, and Plaisance, "Jacopo Corbinelli: de l'exclusion à l'exil. La rupture avec Florence," in *L'exil et l'exclusion dans la culture italienne*, Actes du colloque franco-italien, Aix-en-Provence, 19–21 octobre 1989, réunis par G. Ulysse (Aix-en-Provence, Publications de l'Université de Provence, 1991), 67–76.

37 Carta, *I fuorusciti italiani*, 225.

he arrived in Basle in May 1577. He offered to help print the *Apologia* at one of the numerous printing shops in the city. For Pucci, sharing the fate of his partners in exile, contributing to their publishing work and supporting their anti-tyrannical ideals—of which the *Apologia* was a symbol—was the best way to honour the “burning affection which I have always felt towards the citizens who supported the common good and their homeland” and his “mortal hatred of all tyranny and unfairness”, which he spoke about in a long autobiographical letter sent to Clement VIII in 1592.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the failure to complete this project,<sup>39</sup> the two men maintained their friendship over the following years. Indeed, the first copies of the *Informatione della religione cristiana* (“Information about the Christian religion”) which Pucci published back in England at Wolfe’s printing shop at the end of 1579,<sup>40</sup> were made for Corbinelli, who was then in Paris at the French court. The copies

38 Letter to Pope Clement VIII, 142.

39 Indeed, the two works were not published at all. Lorenzino de’ Medici’s *Apologia* that those Florentine exiles were willing to publish in France and Basel and was instead destined to remain in manuscript for another century and a half (the *editio princeps* is dated 1723), most likely is the sixteenth-century copy preserved in Paris in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Dupuy 589 (cf. Erspermer, “Nota ai testi”, in Lorenzino de’ Medici, *Apologia*, 111).

40 Pucci, *Informatione*. The first reports concerning the work, coming from England as early as the end of 1579, allow us to anticipate by a year the dating that appears on the book’s frontespiece [Florence (false place of printing), 1580], thus correcting the interpretation proposed by Luigi Firpo in “Nuove ricerche su Francesco Pucci,” *Rivista storica italiana* 79 (1967), 1053–1074, now also in *idem*, *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia*, 207–232: 230; cf. in effect the letter sent from the papal nuncio in Paris Dandino to Tolomeo Galli, cardinal of Como, dated Paris, December 23rd, 1579: “Recently published in England is a little book, indicating Florence as a false place of printing; I am sending it to Your Lordship, because I believe it is a very wicked book and I have heard from the man who gave it to me that the author is going to circulate it everywhere, especially in Italy. I hope to collect some more news regarding the specific places where he is going to send it, and as soon as I obtain this new information I shall write you back” (“È stato nuovamente stampato in Inghilterra sotto falso nome che sia stato in Fiorenza un libretto che mando a Vostra Signoria illustrissima, perché credo sia assai cattivo, et intendo da chi me l’ha dato che l’auttore è per seminario in molte parti, et spetialmente in Italia. Et spero ancora di sapere in quali luoghi in particolare è per mandargli, et gliene darò aviso”); *Correspondance du nonce en France Anselmo Dandino 1578–1581*, éditée par Ivan Cloulas (Rome-Paris, Presses de l’Université grégorienne-E. de Boccard, 1970), 567. On the printer John Wolfe and his role as a purveyor of Italian culture in England, see M.G. Bellorini, “Le pubblicazioni italiane dell’editore londinese John Wolfe (1580–1591),” *Miscellanea. Università di Trieste. Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di lingue e letterature straniere con sede in Udine*, 1, ed. by Manlio Cortellazzo (Udine, 1971), 17–65, as well as H.R. Hoppe, “John Wolfe, Printer and Publisher 1579–1601,” *The Library*, s. 4, 14 (1933), 243–289.

arrived with the hope that his old Florentine friend could help distribute his “booklet”; this is revealed in a letter written by the Apostolic Nuncio in Paris, Anselmo Dandino, who told Cardinal Tolomeo Galli on 25 February 1580 that he had taken possession of the “package” sent by Pucci to Corbinelli, containing “copies” of the former’s “booklet”:

A friend of mine received by chance a package from England, from a certain Francesco Pucci, a Florentine, the author of the booklet that I sent your Illustrious Lordship a few days ago and which I told you he had sent on to various places in Italy. I thought that by opening the letters contained therein I was doing something that might be of service to God [...]; and therefore I thought it fit to obtain the copies I am sending you herewith, having packed them up again to be sent to Giacomo Corbinelli, to whom the packet was addressed. Corbinelli is a man of letters and he is staying here with some support from the king. He is an acquaintance of mine and a good friend of the Monsignor of Nazareth and Monsignor Gemmario. I have never known him not to be a Catholic, and I think that they have not either, but I see now that he has a greater understanding with him than would be appropriate, by which I mean that he has received from him many of his booklets and he is trying to have a bookseller sell off a good number of them that he has sent to this town. But I have come here expressly to have them all bought up and burned, as I have no other way to overcome the evil that they would easily cause to many Italians who live here, and thus I will thwart the villain's plan.<sup>41</sup>

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41 *Correspondance du nonce*, 609; the letter is mentioned by Benzoni, *Corbinelli*, 755–756. Evidence of the existence of one or more of Corbinelli's letters to Pucci, not yet located to this day, can be found in another of Dandino's letters, of which Cloulas supplies a detailed account: “Le nonce a adjoint à sa lettre un chiffre et la copie d'une lettre écrite de Paris par Bodley à Pucci en Angleterre et d'une partie de lettre envoyée au même par Corbinelli. Le deux messages ont été interceptés par un ami du nonce qui s'emploie à dévoiler les activités des Anglais en Espagne et à Venise, où un certain capitaine huguenot Masino, dont il est parlé dans une des lettres, adresse souvent des paquets de Londres” (letter of Dandino to Tommaso Galli, cardinal of Como, Paris, March 16th, 1580; *ibid.*, 621); as well as *ibid.*, p. 651 (letter of Dandino to Galli, Paris, April 25th, 1580). Other copies of the *Informatione* were sent by Pucci to the University of Padua, as we learn from a letter written by Cardinal Tolomeo Galli, writing on April 2nd, 1580 to inform the bishop of Padua Federico Cornaro (cf. L. Firpo, “Nuove ricerche,” 230–31). One copy of the little book also reached Fausto Sozzini, as we learn from a letter of his friend Judith Sbardellati on December 3rd, 1580 (*ibid.*, 230). On the *Informatione* cf. *infra*.

Pucci's attempt to involve Corbinelli was part of a broader plan to distribute his booklet, which he wanted to promote on the Italian and European publishing market. He sent many copies to Padua and Ferrara, as well as Lyons, where he could still count on the help of his Florentine friends: "Three hundred of those booklets," Dandino wrote, "were sent to Captain Giovanni Battista Sassetti, a Florentine, in Lyons and to an English heretic, a scholar, in Padua, the son of a Bishop of Ille."<sup>42</sup>

However, somewhat inevitably, this promise to collaborate was fated to be an isolated event in the lives of the two Florentines, as their cultural and political perspectives were too far apart. Indeed, while Corbinelli chose to continue to cultivate his political and literary aspirations at the court of Catherine and Henry III, Pucci gave in to his speculative, wandering nature. The political tendencies he had shared with the Florentine exiles, inspired by republicanism and marked with anti-tyrannical leanings, which came into contact with a dominant theological and doctrinal standpoint, with his prophetic gifts as a *theodidactus*, inevitably found an outlet in a political ideal influenced by utopian ambitions, which was different from the path chosen by Corbinelli. Definitive proof of this was the writing of *Forma d'una repubblica catholica* ('Form of a Catholic Republic') in England in 1581<sup>43</sup>—that "healthy body

<sup>42</sup> Dandino's letter to Tolomeo Galli, Paris February 29th, in *Correspondance du nonce*, 61. Tidings concerning Ferrara and Padua are to be found in a report written by a "friend" of Dandino and transmitted by the papal nuncio to Cardinal Galli: "I have been warned that that Francesco Pucci, who recently made those books printed in England, arranged for 500 copies to be sent to Padua: I do not know yet to whom the whole bale is addressed, but I hope to be soon informed about that. He has already delivered the bale to a certain Nicolo de Gozzi, a merchant from Ragusa living in London, asking him to send it to Hamburg by sea together with his other merchandise. Once in Hamburg, the bale will be sent overland to Italy thanks to the mercenaries passing through Switzerland. Those mercenaries are said to be from Milan, but Ferrara seems to be their final destination. The bale [...] will be loaded on the ship next month, when the merchant's stuff is supposed to leave" ("Quel Francesco Pucci, Fiorentino, che ultimamente fece stampare quei libri in Inghilterra, sono advertito che ne ha fatto una balletta di circa 500 perché vadino a Padova, a chi per ancora non so bene; lo saperò con il primo; la qual balletta l'ha di già consegnata ad uno Nicolo de Gozzi, mercante raguseo residente in Londra, perché la mandi [...] per mare a Amborgho, dove li sonno aperte queste gran balle che si fanno per la commodità de le navi; et di li' poi per terra con la condotta vanno per il paese de Svizzeri in Italia. Li condottieri mi dicono esser Milanese, et deve capitare a Ferrara; la qual balletta [...] sarà carica di questo altro mese, che va la conserva de l'Inglese"); letter of Dandino to Cardinal Galli, Paris, January 31st, 1580; *ibid.*, 592 and footnote 6.

<sup>43</sup> This anonymous work has been attributed to Pucci by both Delio Cantimori and Luigi Firpo.

of a republic" in which all "men of good will [...] without moving from the countries where they live" could live in harmony. Faced with the religious conflicts that were tearing Europe apart at the time, the anonymous author of the *Forma* recommended establishing an ideal secret society consisting of secular members, a "Catholic or universal republic made up of different Colleges of men, who live as foreigners in other countries or as foreigners at home."<sup>44</sup> This "Catholic Republic" (*republica catholica*) would be given the fundamental task of paving the way for the convocation of "a free and holy Council" (un libero e santo concilio) in which all religious divisions would be bridged once and for all.<sup>45</sup> It was an ideal secret society, made up of all the "wandering Christians" in Europe such as Pucci, as well as those who lived as members of religious minorities in their countries and were persecuted by the dominating religion. The members of the "Catholic Republic" had to be secular, as there were divisions among the religious circles which the society aimed to overcome. According to the anonymous author, they had to believe in "a single God, of heaven and earth, creator and governor of the Universe" and "Jesus Christ, who He sent to save the world," as well as redemption "through the death and resurrection" of Christ and divine justice, which rewards the good and punishes the evil.<sup>46</sup> The religion in this Republic had to be Christian and Catholic, but Catholic in the sense of universal, in that the doctrines "accepted by all of Christendom" are Catholic and universal, summed up by the symbol of the Apostles, the Ten Commandments, Sunday oration, "and in the strongest recommendation" to do charity work.<sup>47</sup> This universal religion originates from the "light of natural reason, which enlightens every man who comes into this world,"<sup>48</sup> and also includes belief in the prophecies of the Old Testament, the testimonies of the prophets, the divine wisdom of Christ and his miraculous birth. The rest—"ceremonies", baptism, the Eucharist, the doctrine of the

44 "Repubblica catholica, cioè universale, composta di diversi collegi d'uomini, i quali vivono forastieri per gli altri paesi, o come forastieri in casa loro;" *La Forma di una Repubblica catholica* was published for the first time by Delio Cantimori in *Per la storia degli eretici italiani del secolo XVI in Europa*, testi raccolti da D. Cantimori e E. Feist, Rome, Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1937. The quotations that follow are taken from this edition; in this case, the quote is on page 174.

45 *Ibid.*, 171.

46 "Un solo Dio, del cielo e della terra, creatore e governatore dello Universo;" "quel Giesù Christo ch'egli ha mandato a salvare il mondo;" "mediante la morte e risurrezione;" *ibid.*, 175.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 176.

48 "Lume della ragione naturale, il quale illumina ogni uomo che viene in questo mondo;" *ibid.*, 204.

Trinity and the doctrine of the incarnation—was expressed in generic form and was open to a wide range of interpretations; the author warned readers not to use excessive subtlety to this end.<sup>49</sup> It was established that when the College gathered, the elders would suggest readings for the community taken from the Old Testament—Proverbs, Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, Psalms—or the New Testament—the life and passion of Jesus, the letters of Saint Peter, Saint John and Saint James, and the final chapters of Saint Paul's letters. Any member chosen by common prior agreement could first say a prayer expressing enlightenment from God and then comment on the passage, giving rise to a group discussion in which anyone could take the floor if he had “a divine concept” to express or “a worthy secret” (qualche mirabile segreto) to share with the rest of the community.<sup>50</sup> It is easy to recognize in these statements Pucci's conviction—expressed on different occasions—that any individual could be enlightened by God and become the spokesperson for a “divine” suggestion; every member of the community therefore had the right to express what he thought without submitting to the rigid hierarchical logic that characterized the internal life of the Protestant communities that he had associated with in England in the 1570s.

The final objective was still to summon a holy free Council. To achieve this, the members of the secret society would have to carry out extensive but subtle underground anticlerical propaganda work in order to make Christians in different countries who were not members of the “Catholic Republic” aware of both the tyranny of ecclesiastics and the duty to rebel against their power. To reach this aim, the “Catholic Republic” had to be meticulously organized with all the necessary colleges, statutes, consuls and officials, a body of citizens with “its limbs scattered in different places”, communicating with each other by “means of letter,”<sup>51</sup> and a general diet held periodically by the members of individual colleges in the “land of a gentlemen or lord who is our friend and fellow citizen or in some of those European cities where a renowned fair is held, such as Frankfurt, Lyons, Paris, and the like.”<sup>52</sup> The organisation of the society closely

49 *Ibid.*, 205.

50 *Ibid.*, 177–178.

51 *Per la storia degli eretici italiani del secolo XVI in Europa*, testi raccolti da D. Cantimori e E. Feist (Rome, Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1937), 188.

52 “Terra di qualche gentilhuomo o signore nostro cittadino o amico, ovvero [in] qualcuna di quelle città d'Europa dove si fa qualche segnalata fiera, come Francoforte, Lione, Parigi et simili.” The text continued in this guise: “Thanks to open-air markets our deputies will be able to come and go as they like, move freely without arousing suspicion or encountering obstacles. They will have to wear merchants' habits or something similar and it will be good if they be merchants themselves, having or pretending to have something to do

recalls the secret organisation of the Italian Anabaptists, whose Council met in Venice in 1551 with “congregations” and “churches” (giese) instead of “diets” (diete) and “colleges” (collegi).<sup>53</sup> However, unlike the Anabaptists, who denied their members the right to participate in civil and political life by rejecting any form of oath and configuring their communities as hostile bodies to the ruling political authorities, the anonymous author of the *Forma* presented magistrates and princes as “ministers of God” and claimed that the “Bishop of Rome” and “the ecclesiastical ministers” had to be “subject to princes and civil magistrates, just like other men,” as they were “usurpers” of temporal sovereignty and responsible for the degeneration of political life.<sup>54</sup> Single members of the “Catholic Republic” were obliged to be obedient to the political authority and required to show “respect” and “love;” only in this way would it be possible to create the conditions for the secret society to obtain the benevolence of the political authorities and achieve their objective of fighting ecclesiastical dominance over civil and political life, and freeing the political authorities “from the said ecclesiastical principality and its dependents.”<sup>55</sup> The republican concept of political life seems to have been prevalent in the secret society: a reference to the desired predominance of the figure of the “civil magistrate, elected and approved by the people” suggests that the republican circles frequented by Pucci during his French exile—above all Jacopo Corbinelli—left their mark on his way of understanding the public dimension of power. However, the objectives set out in *Forma d'una Republica catholica*—from the holy and free Council of all Christians to the reform of religious life and the end of theological controversies through the reduction of the fundamental principles of faith—were distant from the political pragmatism of the Florentine republican exiles who accompanied Pucci on part of his journey. The emphasis of the *Forma* was above all on the moral discipline and education that members of the society had to follow. It theorized and to a certain extent formalized a rigorous system

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in those places, provided that their private interest will not make them forget the public good” (“Perché il concorso de' mercati darà molte comodità a' nostri deputati d'andare et venire et di fare i fatti loro, senza sospetto o impedimento alcuno. Vadino in habitu di mercanti o di simili persone non sospette, et sarà bene che i deputati stessi sieno mercanti che habbino o prendino di fare qualcosa in quei luoghi, pur che lo interesse privato non gli facci scordare l'util publico”); *ibid.*, 198.

53 Leandro Perini focuses on *Forma d'una repubblica catholica* as “a secret Anabaptist organisation,” a bit too unequivocally in my opinion, in his essay “La Forma d'una repubblica catolica,” *Bruniana e Campanelliana*, XVII, 2, 2011, 513–526.

54 “Suggeriti a' principi et magistrati civili, come gli altri uomini;” *Per la storia degli eretici italiani*, 181.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 181.

of social control featuring strict censors and reciprocal surveillance (private spying and denunciations by individual members against other members were encouraged by the anonymous author). The family was at the centre of this system of education and social control: *“Disciplina domestica”* (“Domestic discipline”) was the title of the long appendix that accompanied the text.<sup>56</sup> As we know, Pucci attributed great importance to education, a typically humanist trait. He felt that education allowed adult men to continue down the path of natural innocence that started from the maternal womb or, on the contrary, induced them towards evil by renouncing the path of salvation mapped out by God at birth. The *Forma* focuses on the fundamental role of the father in the family unit: while the role of the mother is limited to breastfeeding and providing nourishment to children, the father guides children along their educational path by first choosing a tutor and then a profession that complies with their personal inclinations and the needs of society. Above all though, the father takes on the role of the family priest, taking care of the religious education of his children. The author of the *Forma* appointed the pater familias to direct morning and evening prayers, say grace before and give thanks after meals, administer baptism at the age of thirty (an element that closely recalls adult baptism by the Anabaptists) and, above all, instruct them about the core content of God’s doctrine.<sup>57</sup>

The similarities in themes and language style between *Forma d’una repubblica catholica* and Pucci’s previous and later writings suggest that he was responsible for the anonymous work.<sup>58</sup> There are a number of recurring elements in the *Forma* that also appear in Pucci’s other works and letters at the time. The most notable example is *Informatione della religione christiana*, which we will analyse below. These elements include the invocation of the Council “which will resolve the disputes in Christianity”, the role of education, freedom of speech for those not ordained as church ministers, emphasis on the identification of an essential nucleus of faith that everyone can share and the Zwinglian concept

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56 The complete title of the appendix is: “Disciplina domestica o vero Uffitio di religione de’ padri di famiglia e capi di casa, i quali vivono fra popoli di diverse chiese et opinioni, et vogliono esser d’accordo, per quanto possono, con tutti i christiani, procurando che si raguni il concilio il qual risolva delle dispute che sono in christianità a cagione de’ diversi dottori et predicatori.” Part of the text was published by Delio Cantimori in *Per la storia degli eretici*, 203 et seq.

57 These aspects are focused on by Delio Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento*, 389–390 and M. Eliav-Feldon, “Secret Societies,” 147–148.

58 This hypothesis is supported by Delio Cantimori, who first discovered and published the work, and Luigi Firpo, who confirmed the attribution to Francesco Pucci through a thorough linguistic analysis of the text.

of the Lord's Supper as purely commemorative. However, other considerations suggest that more caution is needed in attributing the anonymous work wholly to Pucci: the lack of any reference to the millenarian perspective, which is a major aspect of his contemporary work *Informatione della religione christiana*, emphasis on prayer as the founding moment of family life, the use of the plural subject "we" instead of the first person singular that the Florentine used in his writings and the lack of references to any of his other works. These and other elements would imply that Pucci was one of the co-authors or collaborators in the "republican" project rather than the sole author of the text.<sup>59</sup> In any case, his central role in drafting the *Forma* cannot be questioned and the text must be considered an important part of his intellectual biography.

Luigi Firpo defined the *Forma* as "a new dynamic and revolutionary concept of secret religious Nicodemism."<sup>60</sup> To put it another way, it was a totally original blend of utopian elements and concrete organizational requests; a utopian republic which could never have been created in the terms suggested by its creator. At the same time though, certain extremely realistic elements (its statutes, diets, etc.) made it different from the many other utopias circulating in sixteenth-century Europe.<sup>61</sup> In any event, it did not coincide with the intellectual aspirations and political perspectives of Pucci's friend Jacopo Corbinelli.<sup>62</sup>

59 The first author to put forward this hypothesis was Giorgio Radetti ("Riformatori ed eretici italiani del secolo XVI," *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, XXI, 1940, 90). See now also M. Biagioni (*Francesco Pucci e l'Informatione della religione christiana*, pp. 71–73).

60 "Una nuova concezione dinamica e rivoluzionaria del segreto nicodemismo religioso," L. Firpo, "Nuove ricerche," 232.

61 For these aspects, see M. Eliav-Feldon, "Secret Societies, Utopias, and Peace Plans: the Case of Francesco Pucci," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 14 (1984), 139–158; and E. Barnavi—eadem, *Le périple de Francesco Pucci. Utopie, hérésie et vérité religieuse dans la Renaissance tardive* (Paris, Hachette, 1988), *ad indicem*.

62 Final evidence of the two being in contact with each other dates back to October 1581, when Pucci was still in England; see the unpublished letter sent by Corbinelli to Pinelli, written in Paris on October 7th, 1581, in which he asserts that "Pucci was disguised as that friar Acciaiuoli, who visited him in England" ("Pucci incapperucciò quel frate Acciaiuoli che l'è ito a trovare in Inghilterra: et si prova se sarà sufficiente a ministrare, come sarà a maritare"); BAM, ms. T 167 sup., c. 89r; the reference is to the Florentine Zanobi Acciaioli, member of the Italian Church in London, who presented to the ministers of his Church a composition by Pucci, in which he proposed the conditions of a theological dispute; see L. Firpo, "La Chiesa italiana di Londra nel Cinquecento e i suoi rapporti con Ginevra, in Ginevra e l'Italia, raccolta di studi promossa dalla facoltà valdese di teologia di Roma, ed. by D. Cantimori, L. Firpo, G. Spini, F. Venturi, V. Vinay, Florence, Sansoni, 1959, 307–412, now also in idem, *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia*, 178–179. Previous evidence of the relationship between Pucci and Corbinelli at the time of Pucci's stay in England is included in a

### 3 An Anti-Roman Polemicist or a Masked “Papist”?

The publication of the *Informatione della religione christiana* in late 1579 was Pucci's desperate attempt to achieve public recognition for his “new theology” (teologia novella).<sup>63</sup> Driven by the deafening silence following the publication of his Basle theses in January 1578,<sup>64</sup> he had set all his hopes on the publication of this “information about religion” or “confession of faith” which, as we have seen, he hastened to distribute as widely as possible.<sup>65</sup> In this slim volume, Pucci presented the “sum and substance” of his theological thinking, which he had already illustrated both publicly in Basle and privately in a long letter to Niccolò Balbani.<sup>66</sup> He focused on the “habit of universal faith” that is characteristic of every man, something that is simply “constant [...] trust in God,”<sup>67</sup> and reminded his readers that the “Spirit of Wisdom and God's reason is naturally present in all men who have the use of reason.”<sup>68</sup> In short, he forcefully reiterated his doctrine of humankind's universal salvation, obtained through the “sacrifice of the victor Messiah”.<sup>69</sup>

All mortals descending from Adam are provided with divine grace, and all may be saved [...] if, [...] they do not bring damnation upon themselves by resisting divine inspiration.<sup>70</sup>

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letter sent by Corbinelli to his friend Pinelli (Bourbonlancy, october 5th, 1580), in which he wrote that “I received Pucci's letters from England” (“D'Inghilterra ho lettere del Pucci il quale se le raccomanda di quel che fa et che io lo prego a pensare un poco che si ha a tener conto d'ogni sorte d'amico”); *ibid.*, c. 62r. Both letters are cited in C. Campitelli, *Un esule fiorentino alla corte di Francia. Jacopo Corbinelli. Storia e storiografia*, B.A. thesis in Early Modern History, academic year 2006–2007, Faculty of Political Science, University of Roma Tre.

63 The expression is used by Fausto Sozzini in a famous letter, dated December 3rd, 1580 and addressed to his friend Dudith Sbardellati in Breslau, on which see Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, n. 83, 146–147; and L. Firpo, “Nuove ricerche,” 230.

64 See Pucci, *Informatione*, 194–195. The *Thesis* diffused by Pucci in Basel has been published in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 21–23, and in Firpo, *Scritti*, 299–300.

65 Cf. *supra*.

66 For the short quotation see Pucci, *Informatione*, 4. The quoted letter to Balbani is in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 23–54.

67 Pucci, *Informatione*, 18.

68 *Ibid.*, 19.

69 *Ibid.*, 58. Cf. also *ibid.*, 107–108.

70 *Ibid.*, 56–57.

Only disobedience—conscious resistance to God's will—could lead man along the path of damnation.<sup>71</sup> However, the *Informatione* also contained a violent attack on Rome. The “Roman monarchy” bore very little resemblance to the lamented original Church in which “the majority and the resolution of the deliberations belonged to the council of faithful *spirituals*”. Pucci longed for a return to a community of Christians in which “the particular things” that “were placed in doubt by Christian *spirituals*” could be cleared up by a “council of the faithful multitude” and not by the arbitrary decisions of a single person. “The governing of the Church”, in contrast, had “fallen into the hands of one person, but it is not known who this is.”<sup>72</sup> The “abuse of excommunication”<sup>73</sup> had brutally taken the place of the *correctio fraterna* that old Christian communities used to regulate internal relations.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, all the power was concentrated in the hands of a few men who “under the empty title of the Church of Rome obtain obedience and reverence, even from great kings and princes.”<sup>75</sup> Pucci invoked a decisive return to origins; the multitudes of believers, who had the right of “sovereignty”,<sup>76</sup> would elect a college of “elders”, whose duty it would be to “govern each church”<sup>77</sup> in the name of the “people”.<sup>78</sup> Each college would be assisted in the daily running of the religious life of each church by a certain number of “officers”, who were regularly elected by the faithful.<sup>79</sup> Pucci believed that the time was ripe for this radical change.

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71 See also *ibid.*, 36–37. In this circumstance too, Pucci recalled that the general salvation of humankind did not have “sacramental” or geographical limits. With a clear allusion to those children who died without being baptized and to people unaware of God's word, Pucci underlined that “those who die before being guilty of mistrust, can only be considered saved” (“quei che muoiono prima che sieno colpevoli di diffidenza, non si possono tenere se non salvati”); *ibid.*, 59.

72 *Ibid.*, 161.

73 *Ibid.*, 162.

74 *Ibid.*, 158–159.

75 *Ibid.*, 169.

76 *Ibid.*, 153.

77 *Ibid.*, 148.

78 *Ibid.*, 153.

79 “Each assembly of Christians has to elect the officials they need, according to the number of their people, to teach, administer the sacraments, visit their sick patients, collect and distribute charities, educate the children and for any need they could have” (“Ogni ragunanza di christiani dee eleggere gli uftiali che le bisognano, secondo la quantità del suo popolo, per insegnare, per amministrare i sacramenti, per visitare i malati, per raccorre e distribuire le limosine, per ammaestrare i fanciulli, et per tutto quello che bisogna di mano in mano”); *ibid.*, 150.

Important “prophetic and apostolic testimonies” suggested that the Church of Rome would soon know “its purpose”, probably “in the years between 1580 and 1590”.<sup>80</sup> The “Messiah” would soon return to earth in order “to strike down this evil power”, “reform the laity and assist the faithful with a powerful arm.”<sup>81</sup> “One thousand years of happy reign,” announced Pucci in the best manner of the millenarian tradition, at the end of which the last “brief” “attack” by Satan on the “reign of Christians” would open the gates to the “last judgement”,<sup>82</sup> the day when men would be judged “according to their individual works”. As a result, the “good” would be able to enjoy “eternal happiness laid before them by God the Father”, while the “evil” would be condemned to the eternal torment of the “punishments, which they will have deserved for despising the goodness of God and his patience in urging them to repent.”<sup>83</sup> It was in preparation for the imminent coming of the ‘Messiah’ that Pucci first invoked the summoning of a free and universal Council, a gathering of Christians free of hierarchical constraints that would discuss the reform of the Church. To this end, he formulated a prayer to God so that “He rouses the minds of pilgrims of our time with His divine trumpet, in our country and in other nations, and makes them intrepid and strong against all earthly observances and against the temptations of the opposing ranks.” Only in this way, “if some learned and devout men ever agreed together to disregard temporal dangers and not to consider carnal interests,” only if these men dedicated themselves “to an examination and reform of religion and church, as it is supposed to be,” was Pucci sure that they “could satisfy the desire for a Christian Council, shared by all those with some feeling for the things of God and that everyone admits is needed to put the ecclesiastics back in their place.”<sup>84</sup> Pucci returned to these issues insistently in the years to come, even after the formal abjuration of his heresies.

Somewhat predictably, the printed booklet failed to bring him the desired success; the copies that reached Italy were duly intercepted and taken out

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80 *Ibid.*, 170.

81 *Ibid.*, 170–171.

82 *Ibid.*, 190.

83 *Ibid.*, 190–191.

84 “Con la sua divina tromba svegli i peregrini ingegni di questo secolo, sì della nostra come delle altre nationi, et gli facci arditi e forti contra tutti i rispetti mondani et contra le tentationi delle schiere avversarie; ‘se qualche huomini intendentì e divoti si accordassero una volta insieme a trascurare i pericoli temporali e non guardare a gli interessi carnali;’ ‘ad una esamina et riforma di religione e di chiesa, come ella dee essere;’ ‘potrebbono satisfare a quel desiderio d’un concilio christiano, che è in tutti quelli che hanno qualche sentimento delle cose di Dio et che ogn’uno confessa essere necessario per ridurre gli ecclesiastici a segno;’ *ibid.*, 9–10.

of circulation in a highly efficient and thorough act of censorship.<sup>85</sup> The Roman authorities could not ignore a volume which so directly attacked the *"Romanam Ecclesiam et hierarchiam"*, and when Pucci abjured before the Papal Nuncio in Prague a few years later, the *Informatione* inevitably constituted one of the main charges brought against him.<sup>86</sup>

The reaction was no better in England; as a result of these “paradoxical theses of his, [...] he was subjected to certain punishments [...] and even thrown into prison”<sup>87</sup> Indeed, Pucci’s diffidence towards the Protestant doctrine was just as clearly visible in these pages as his anti-Roman hostility.

The deep sense of disappointment and the feeling of isolation that characterized the final months of his second sojourn in England came to a dramatic end with an event that he probably witnessed. On 14 November 1581, the English Jesuit Edmund Campion, a leading figure in the first Catholic mission in England since the time of Mary Tudor and Reginald Pole together with Robert Parsons, was arrested and tried a few days later in Westminster Hall on a charge of high treason together with seven other ecclesiastics.<sup>88</sup> When he was executed at Tyburn on 1 December, the tension accompanying the provocative Jesuit presence on English soil reached its peak. Pucci had probably

85 One copy survived that violent censorial repression. It is preserved in the Stadt Bibliothek in Zurich [Gal. Tz. 1330], already pointed out by Firpo, “Nuove ricerche,” 228. On the *Informatione* see also the recent work by D. Pirillo, *Filosofia ed eresia nell’Inghilterra del tardo Cinquecento. Bruno, Sidney e i dissidenti religiosi italiani* (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2010). A modern edition of the work has been very recently published by M. Biagioni, *Francesco Pucci e l’Informatione della religione christiana* (Turin, Claudiana, 2011).

86 Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 194.

87 It is the account of the event given a few years later by Fausto Sozzini in a letter to Matthaeus Radecke (January 1586); cf. Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, n. 104, 175; and Firpo, “Nuove ricerche,” 231.

88 On Campion’s trial, see J.V. Holleran, *A Jesuit Challenge. Edmund Campion’s Debates at the Tower of London in 1581* (New York, 1999); T.M. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1541–1588. ‘Our Way of Proceeding’?* (Leiden, New York, Cologne, Brill, 1996), 155. But see also E.E. Reynolds, *Campion and Parsons: The Jesuit Mission of 1580–1* (London, 1980), as well as R. Simpson, *Edmund Campion: A Biography*, (London, 1896; second edition). More generally, on the Jesuits’ presence in Elizabethan England, see V. Houlston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England. Robert Persons’s Jesuit Polemic, 1580–1610* (Aldershot-Rome, Ashgate-Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2007); T.H. Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers: The Allen-Persons Party and the Political Thought of the Counter-Reformation in England, 1572–1615* (Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1964); S. Tutino, *Law and Conscience. Catholicism in Early Modern England, 1570–1625* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007).

met Campion and had certainly read and appreciated his *Rationes decem* ("Ten Rules"), a text drafted a few months before his arrest that circulated clandestinely in Catholic circles.<sup>89</sup> He may even have had the opportunity to tell him about his religious worries and political perspectives. He was certainly deeply affected by the death sentence.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, he probably decided to leave England in the emotional aftershock of the tragic event; he informed his mother, Lisabella Giambonelli, of the decision a few weeks after the Jesuit's death. The failure of yet another attempt to start a theological dispute with the members of the Italian Church in London,<sup>91</sup> the humiliation of his punishment (perhaps even the shame of prison)<sup>92</sup> and the profound sense of isolation growing within him were all dramatically reflected by Campion's death sentence; there was no longer any place in Elizabethan London for a free spirit like him. It is hard to say how close Pucci felt to English Jesuitism and the *Forma d'una repubblica catholica* (1581) does little to resolve the many doubts. The radical statements about "usurpation" of the "place of God on earth" by the bishop of Rome "and other ecclesiastics similar to him"<sup>93</sup> closely resembled the positions already expressed in the pages of the *Informatione* and suggest that any rapprochement with the papacy was still far off. However, his firm anti-Protestant standpoint conveyed the impression that he was a free thinker in and around the sphere of influence of Rome. Though Pucci was never directly mentioned by the jurisconsult Alberico Gentili, one of the most authoritative members of the Italian Church in London, he was described as a sort of camouflaged Catholic, a troublemaker in the service of Rome. In Gentili's only work of a religious nature, a still-unpublished violent anti-Roman invective eloquently entitled *De papato romano antichristo*, written presumably between 1580, when he arrived in London,<sup>94</sup> and 1584, he violently attacked certain unnamed free spirits. He felt that although they were close to the Italian Church in London, they were actually acting against it and undermining its unity. He duly inveighed against these papists masked as Anabaptists, libertines or followers of Schwenckfeld, sectarians who wanted to divide his Reformed Italian Church and bring it back under papal control:

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89 Cf. *supra*, ch. 1.

90 On Pucci's empathy towards people who were victims of religious intolerance cf. *supra*, ch. 1.

91 Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 147–148.

92 Cf. *supra*.

93 Pucci, *Forma*, 181.

94 Firpo, *La Chiesa italiana di Londra*, 174.

They are emissaries of the Anabaptists, Libertines, Schwenckfeldians, Servites, Antitrinitarians. They say in their hearts: divide and conquer. However, they are not for us, nor will they remain with us; they will join with the Pope. For they strive to disturb the Church of Christ now, when its virtue could not be greater.<sup>95</sup>

It was not difficult to detect the name of Francesco Pucci behind the veil of this general invective. The churchless and restless Florentine inevitably attracted the hostility of the London pastors, as he sought to provoke arguments among members of the Italian community by insinuating doubts, raising new questions and demanding to take part in public disputes with them. Gentili saw him as nothing more than a papal emissary, an exile without a country whose doctrine mixed Anabaptist, Antitrinitarian and Spiritualist elements, but who in the end always looked towards Rome. In the words of the Italian jurisconsult, there was a close echo of the polemical invective hurled at the “satanic” Giorgio Siculo and the heretic Pietro Manelfi a few decades earlier by the ex-Augustinian Giulio della Rovere in his *Esortatione al martirio* (*Exhortation to Martyrdom*), accusing them of having “mixed Papism with Anabaptism”<sup>96</sup>

The English treasurer Francis Knollys shared similar worries at the time. Writing to William Cecil and Robert Dudley in late 1581, Knollys warned of the potential dangers to the Presbyterian cause from the seemingly pious “freewill men”, who were prepared to accept the Roman Mass and assert the possibility of

95 “Sui sunt emissarii anabaptistae, libertine, schwenckfeldiani, servetistae, antitrinitarii. Dixit in corde suo: divide et impera. Sed ex nobis non erant in illi, nam permansissent nobiscum: ipsis cum papato in pluribus convenit. Per eos turbare Ecclesiam Christi nititur hic, quando iam sua virtute nihil amplius potest;” A. Gentili, *De papatu romano antichristo assertiones ex verbo Dei et ss. Patribus*, Alberico Gentili italo auctore, Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. D’Orville 607, c. 84r; quoted in V. Lavenia, “Alberico Gentili: i processi, le fedi, la guerra,” in *Ius gentium ius communicationis ius belli*. Alberico Gentili e gli orizzonti della modernità. Atti del convegno di Macerata in occasione delle celebrazioni del quarto centenario della morte di Alberico Gentili (1552–1608) Macerata, 6–7 dicembre 2007, ed. by L. Lacchè (Milan, Giuffrè editore, 2009), 167–196: 186; and, above all, in D. Panizza, *Alberico Gentili giurista e ideologo nell’Inghilterra elisabettiana* (Padua, 1981), 20–21. On Gentili charging Rome and the pope with Pelagianism, cf. *ibid.*, 184. On Gentili’s unpublished treatise, see also D. Quaglioni, “L’inedito De papatu Romano Antichristo,” in *«Ius gentium»*, 197–207.

96 Cantimori, *Eretici italiani*, 72; C. Ginzburg, *Il nicodemismo. Simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa nell’Europa del Cinquecento* (Turin, Einaudi, 1970), 175; M. Firpo, *Riforma protestante*, 157; Id., “Introduzione,” to J. Valdés, *Alfabeto Cristiano*, cXL; Prosperi, *L’eresia del Libro grande. Storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta* (Milan, Feltrinelli, 2000), 209.

salvation even without imputing the merits of Christ. Anti-predestinarianism and soteriological optimism provided common ground for these Anabaptists, as Knollys defined them, from which he felt the Papist cause could derive great benefit.<sup>97</sup> Gentili and Knollys's concerns were well founded. Although Pucci was certainly not a Papist, least of all a masked one, it seems that his gaze was always focused on the Italian peninsula; he probably never stopped regarding Rome as the pinnacle of the renewed *Ecclesia catholica universalis* (Universal Catholic Church) that he yearned for.<sup>98</sup>

#### 4 Between Heretics and Jesuits. Converting in Europe at the End of the Sixteenth-Century

Leaving London for Antwerp,<sup>99</sup> Pucci chose to give full expression to the Nicodemite dimension that had shaped the anonymous Republican project of the *Forma* a few months previously. At the time, he saw Nicodemite practices as the best way to escape from his profound feeling of isolation, as no

97 Knollys was referring in particular to Sebastian Castellio who was going to publish a new edition of his *Dialogi quattuor*; his words though can be easily extended to such a person as Francesco Pucci. See F. Buisson, *Sébastien Castellion. Sa vie et son oeuvre*, 2 vols. (Paris, Hachette, 1892), 2, 498–99 (Buisson's work has been recently republished by Droz, with an introduction by M. Engammare); D. Domenichini, "Studio introduttivo," in B. Arias Montano, *Dictatum Christianum*, edition and introductory study by D. Domenichini (Pisa, Giardini editori e stampatori, 1984), 13–68:13.

98 This kind of awareness would appear more clearly in Pucci's thought only a few years later, under the guise of clear distinction between papacy as an institution, on the one side, and single ruling popes, on the other.

99 On Pucci's stay in Antwerp we have scant documentary evidence; see Barnavi e Eliav-Feldon, *Le périple*, 140 ff., where the two authors proposed the hypothesis of a close relationship between Pucci and the members of the Family of Love. It is likely that the decision to move to Antwerp was suggested to Pucci by the English Jesuits with whom he sympathized in London. Their connection with the city of Antwerp was already solid at the beginning of the 1580s and would grow in the following years, especially thanks to figures like Richard Verstegan, Parsons' agent, who was in charge of diffusing Jesuit polemical texts and propaganda pamphlets coming from England: Verstegan himself secretly printed a detailed account of Campion's death (*A true reporte of the death and martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste*) written after the execution of the sentence; see P. Arblaster, *Antwerp and the World. Richard Verstegan and the International Culture of the Catholic Reformation* (Louvain, Louvain University Press, 2004), 18–21. More generally, on the English presence in Antwerp, see O. De Smedt, *De Engelse Natie te Antwerpen in de 16e eeuw, 1496–1582*, 2 vols. (Antwerpen, De Sikkel, 1950–1954).

one of any faith or ecclesiastical institution could accept him or even understand his reasons.<sup>100</sup> He even enacted his own death in June–July 1582. It has been suggested that he simply wanted to defend his property against possible confiscation,<sup>101</sup> but the fact that he went into hiding demonstrates his growing feeling of inner malaise, a desire for deep personal reflection after many years of being in the public eye, a clear wish to undertake a “more private and exemplary life”. This is also apparent in a letter sent to his mother before his departure for Flanders,<sup>102</sup> in what was probably the first clear manifestation of a profound rethinking of his religious choices, the first significant indication of the interior torment that led him to decide to return to Italy at the beginning of the next decade.<sup>103</sup> He may also have been guided in this direction by his encounter with the *Family of Charity* (*Familia charitatis*).<sup>104</sup> This esoteric sect, founded in the 1530s by Hendrik Niclaes, boasted strong ties with England and experienced its greatest success when Pucci was in Antwerp thanks to the friendship between the French printer Christophe Plantin and the Spanish Biblicalist Benito Arias Montano. Pucci probably had the chance to discuss his Nicodemite project of *respublica catholica* with them and share his latitudinarian, tolerant ideals, imparting his millenarian expectations, comparing

<sup>100</sup> A few years later Pucci wrote about the “great anxiety” that troubled his mind (“grande inquietudine d'animo”) for not having found, “in a peregrination of 14 years” (“in 14 anni di peregrinatione”), “a Church where to rest my soul” (“una chiesa in cui potessi riposarmi”); cf. *infra*.

<sup>101</sup> Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 20.

<sup>102</sup> Letter from London, January 27th, 1582, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 59.

<sup>103</sup> His concealment lasted until the mid-1580s, during which he signed his letters to his relatives with the initials “L.T.” Luigi Firpo himself has underlined “his hidden aim to restart his ingenuous and indefatigable apostolate under new guises and in new lands;” Firpo, “Nuove ricerche,” 232. On this point, see more amply also *infra*.

<sup>104</sup> His former London teacher Antonio del Corro could have been an intermediary between Pucci and the Family of Love, on which see *supra*, ch. 1. On Corro’s connections with the *Familia charitatis*, see A. Hamilton, *The Family of Love* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980), 113. On Plantin and his inclination to simulation (*ibid.*, 92 and 65). As we have already pointed out, Barnavi and Eliav-Feldon also discussed the hypothesis of a connection between Pucci and the *Familia charitatis* (*Le périple*, 142 ff.). Hamilton himself included the *Forma d'una republica catholica* in the Familist and Rosicrucian tradition; cf. *ibid.*, 164, footnote 1; cf. also Domenichini, “Studio introduttivo,” 14 and 21, who also reckons the evidence from Pucci’s documents in the context of an era of nostalgia facing the increasing hardening of Protestant orthodoxy, that saw the proliferation of a consistent number of small and geographically limited cliques. Familism could have been one of the points of connection between Pucci and John Dee (cf. A. Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 113).

positions on the centrality of the benefit of Christ's sacrifice in the process of man's regeneration and salvation,<sup>105</sup> appreciating their belief that Catholicism was superior to Protestantism, listening with interest to their discussions on the role that the Roman religion might be able to play in bridging the divisions and ending the religious conflicts that were dividing Flanders at the time.<sup>106</sup> Pucci's letter to Fausto Sozzini "from the 35th session of the Council on the peregrination of Christians" (ex sessione xxxv concilii peregrinantium christianorum) about the "many sessions" of that "meeting" of journeying Christians can probably be related to his stay in Antwerp.<sup>107</sup> This was proof of the tenacity with which he pursued the objective of a concrete translation of his "republican" project, but also a sign that he had finally found an audience for the project. It was probably at the same time and in the same circles that Pucci met the Dutch humanist Giusto Lipsio, whose own encounter with the *Family of Charity* had prompted him to complete his conversion to Catholicism.<sup>108</sup>

As the months passed, the atmosphere became increasingly hostile towards the Catholics in Antwerp and, in general, towards anyone who did not support Protestantism. On 20 December 1581, just four years before the Calvinist conquest of the city, Catholic worship was prohibited for the first time and anti-Catholic measures became even harsher following the assassination of William of Orange (18 March 1582), paving the way for an Edict (1584) that prescribed the penalty of banishment for anyone practising Catholicism.<sup>109</sup> The growing

<sup>105</sup> On the contrary, their thoughts about the beneficial effects of that act of love diverged, as Niclaes, unlike Pucci, tended to ascribe them only to a very limited number of the Perfected (*perfetti*).

<sup>106</sup> For these positions ascribed to Plantin cf. Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 66.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. the letter of Fausto Sozzini to M. Radecke, January 8th 1586, in *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*, Irenopoli [Amsterdam], 1656, v. 2, 379b; Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 172 ff.

<sup>108</sup> On Lipsius, his connections with the *Familia charitatis* and his conversion, see Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 96–102; J. de Landtsheer, "Le retour de Juste Lipse de Leyden à Louvain selon sa correspondance (1591–1594)," in *Juste Lipse (1547–1606) en son temps*, Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 1994, réunis par Christian Mouchel (Paris, Champion, 1996), 347–368; S. Burgio, "Divus Plato, Diva virgo. Miti di ricomposizione in Giusto Lipsio," in *Filosofia e storiografia. Studi in onore di Girolamo Cotroneo*, vol. 1, ed. by Francesca Rizzo (Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2005), 25–51. In Calvinist Leiden Lipsius was accused of concealing his membership in the Familist sect (*ibid.*, 32). On Pucci's friendship with Lipsius, see the long letter written by the Florentine exile in 1592, on the occasion of dispatching to his friend a copy of his *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*; cf. Firpo, *Scritti*, 131–134.

<sup>109</sup> S. Burgio, "Divus Plato," 38. Cf. also G. Manerf, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970). On the fortunes of the Catholic minority in Calvinist Netherlands, see now C.H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins. Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge Ma., Harvard University Press, 2008).

climate of repression must have been partly responsible for Pucci's decision to leave Flanders in May 1583; as he himself reported, things were going "from bad to worse".<sup>110</sup> The Florentine exile stayed in Frisia for several weeks at the University of Helmstadt, before moving on to Saxony.<sup>111</sup> His direct daily contact with Lutherans and Calvinists confirmed and reinforced the negative opinion of the Protestant doctrine that he had developed over the preceding years:

There I learned from my daily experience what I had already long since understood from my studies of the Holy Scriptures and writings of men, that is to say, the weakness of the foundations of the doctrines of Luther, Calvin and others, who have boasted in these unhappy times in which we live that they are the prophets of God and reformers of the Church, but have strangely transformed and divided it.<sup>112</sup>

After the primordial instinct of solidarity that had marked his brief flirtation with the French Calvinists in the early 1570s, Pucci had gradually distanced himself from the Reformed Church following the tragic events of the night of St Bartholomew, to the point where he stood out as one the bitterest enemies of Protestant theology. His extraordinary familiarity with Luther and Calvin's main works—which struck Tommaso Campanella at the end of the century<sup>113</sup>—was simply the product of his meticulous preparation for his numerous disputes with theologians and men of the Protestant Church "without any foundation in charity and loyalty". By providing him with the opportunity to directly experience the futility and insubstantiality of all the reasons advanced by those who had assumed the dramatic responsibility of irremediably shattering the unity of the Christian world ("they have strangely transformed and divided it," he wrote of them), this stay in Saxony was a decisive step in his rapprochement with Rome.

In the end, growing weary of spending his days in the company of "those drunkards" (quei briachi), Pucci accepted an invitation from "friends and

<sup>110</sup> Letter to his brother Giovanni, Cracow, March 15th, 1584, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 63–65, quotation at p. 63.

<sup>111</sup> Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 20.

<sup>112</sup> Letter to his brother Giovanni, in which Pucci defined Luther's and Calvin's followers as drunks («briachi»); Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 63; see also Biagioni, "Introduzione," to Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, 3.

<sup>113</sup> Remembering his encounter with Pucci in the Roman prisons during the mid-1590s, Tommaso Campanella recalled with great admiration the Florentine's ability to quote from memory entire chapters of Luther's and Calvin's works; see also *infra*, ch. vi.

acquaintances with an exemplary and devout life" to stay in Krakow and left for Poland,<sup>114</sup> where he found the ideal atmosphere to reach a decision that he had probably been entertaining for some years. The Polish capital was one of the most tolerant cities in the Western Christian world. The political fragmentation, power and independence of the aristocracy, who jealously guarded their prerogatives, and the profound influence of Erasmian humanism had made it a place of tolerance and religious coexistence. Indeed, the presence of Lutherans, Calvinists, Orthodox Christians, Antitrinitarians, Anabaptists, Jews and Muslims in a predominantly Catholic country (the kingdom of Stefano Bathory was still officially Catholic) created ideal conditions for those who, like the Society of Jesus, saw the spiritual reconquest of souls as their life mission.<sup>115</sup> The prestige and esteem that the Jesuits enjoyed, even among the freest and most independent spirits of the time, naturally made their task easier,<sup>116</sup> and

<sup>114</sup> Among those was the merchant Sebastiano Montelupi, «amico non piccolo», to whom Pucci explicitly refers in a letter to his brother Giovanni (August 1585); cf. Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 70. On the close relationship between the two friends see the recent study by R. Mazzei, *La trama nascosta. Storie di mercanti e altro secoli XVI–XVII* (Viterbo, Sette Città, 2005), 207–209. More generally on the relationship between merchants and heresy in sixteenth century Europe see R. Mazzei, 'I mercanti e la circolazione delle idee religiose,' in *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa*, ed. by G.L. Fontana and L. Molà, vol. IV, *Commercio e cultura mercantile*, ed. by F. Franceschi, R.A. Goldthwaite, R.C. Mueller (Treviso, Colla editore, 2007), 455–78.

<sup>115</sup> For an overview of the Jesuits' presence in Central and Eastern Europe, see H. Louthan, *Converting Bohemia. Force and persuasion in the Catholic Reformation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009); C. Madonia, *La Compagnia di Gesù e la riconquista cattolica dell'Europa orientale* (Genoa, Name, 2002); cf. also J.P. Donnelly, "Some Jesuit Counter-Reformation Strategies in East Central Europe, 1550–1585," in *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Honor of De Lamar Jensen* (Kirksville, Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), 83–94; more specifically for Poland, see R. Ruggeri, *Religione e politica in Polonia tra Riforma e Controriforma* (Pisa, Giardini, 1988), and J. Tazbir, *La culture polonaise des XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles dans le contexte européen* (Rome, Unione internazionale degli Istituti di Archeologia, 2001).

<sup>116</sup> See, for example, the letter written by the humanist Dudith Sbardellati to his old private teacher Reuter who had decided to move back to Geneva (October 1583): "I would have preferred that you chose a place where to learn something and open your mind. If I was you, I would have chosen Paris, where to learn from Sorbonne's professors and from the Jesuits. I am not joking. Among them, as well as among Dominicans and Franciscans, you can find very distinguished men and philosophers of great value with whom to debate and undertake disputationes that open your mind. Those philosophers and theologians, well known men from this and previous ages, who have now attracted general attention by confronting their enemies with elegant and solid writings and knowledges, come right from there" (my translation from latin); Esztergom, Főszékesegyházi Könyvtár [FSzK],

members of the Society soon became the most valued collaborators of Alberto Bolognetti, the Apostolic Nuncio in Krakow.<sup>117</sup> Many Italian and European heretical dissenters were approached by the Nuncio and members of the Society of Jesus as part of an extensive conversion strategy. Some were able to resist the siren call of the Jesuits, while others yielded to the forcefulness of their persuasion skills. The Calvinist Marcello Squarcialupi, for example, with whom the Rector of the Jesuit College of Cluj in Transylvania had started a “spiritual affair,” “was not far from righteousness”<sup>118</sup> but ultimately remained unconvinced. Likewise, after initially giving Bolognetti a reason for hope, the Antitrinitarian Fausto Sozzini—Pucci’s adversary in the dispute of Basel in 1578 and again in Krakow in 1583–84—refused to return to the Catholic Church.<sup>119</sup> However, in other cases the Jesuit initiative was successful. In February 1582, Simone Simoni returned to Catholicism and Nuncio Bolognetti almost succeeded in completing the task by persuading him to make a formal abjuration.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, two of Pucci’s closest Italian friends in Krakow, Prospero Provana, a rich banker who had welcomed him into his house like an

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Cat. v Tit. iv/d, p. 111; quoted in G. Almasi, “Andreas Dudith (1533–1589). Conflicts and strategies of a religious individualist in confessionalising Europe,” in *Between Scylla and Charybdis. Learned Letter Writers navigating the Reefs of Religious and Political Controversy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by J. De Landtsheer and H. Nellen (Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2011), 161–184. Dudith had even dared to write back to Théodore de Bèze, asserting the superiority of the Jesuit schools over the academies of the reformers; for the bitter answer by Bèze, see S.M. Manetsch, *Theodore Beza and the Quest for Peace in France 1562–1598* (Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2000), 127–128.

<sup>117</sup> We lack a modern critical study on Bolognetti; for now see F. Calori Cesis, *Il cardinale Alberto Bolognetto e la sua nunziatura in Polonia* (Modena, Regia Tipografia Governativa, 1861).

<sup>118</sup> Letter of the Jesuit Campano to the nuncio Bolognetti, February 26th, 1584, quoted in M. Firpo, “Alcuni documenti sulla conversione al cattolicesimo dell’eretico lucchese Simone Simoni,” 1479–1502: 1495. See also D. Caccamo, *Eretici italiani*, 128–129.

<sup>119</sup> “He made me hope that he might return to the Catholic faith, provided that I helped him to resolve some doubts” (“Mi dava speranza di tornare alla fede cattolica, quand’io gl’avessei a risolvere alcuni dubii”), wrote Alberto Bolognetti in a letter, dated April 1583, addressed to Cardinal Jacopo Savelli, member of the Congregation of the Inquisition. The letter, published in *Monumenta Poloniae Vaticanae*, Cracow, 1938, vi, f. 257, is amply quoted by J. Tedeschi, “Notes toward a Genealogy of the Sozzini family,” in *Italian Reformation Studies in Honor of Laelius Socinus*, ed. by J. Tedeschi (Florence, Le Monnier, 1965), 275–315, quotation at p. 309. According to Bolognetti’s account, his attempt at persuasion came to nothing thanks to threats made against Sozzini by the Jesuit Antonio Possevino (*ibid.*).

<sup>120</sup> M. Firpo, “Alcuni documenti,” 1485–1486; see also C. Madonia, “Simone Simoni da Lucca,” *Rinascimento*, 23 (1980), 161–197. Both authors stressed the calculating nature of Simoni’s

old friend (a “brother,” even),<sup>121</sup> and Giovanni Michele Bruto, an old acquaintance from their common stay in Lyons in the 1570s, returned to the fold of the Catholic Church as a result of Bolognetti’s intervention. Pucci found a very similar climate in Prague, where he decided to move in July 1585.<sup>122</sup> The city was the residence of Emperor Rudolph II and was one of the liveliest and most cosmopolitan cities of the era. Careful to repel both the attempted interference of Rome and the political demands of the litigious Protestant factions, the Emperor had succeeded in guaranteeing the city wide margins of religious freedom, making it a desirable destination for free spirits of any provenance. An alarmed Apostolic Nuncio wrote a few years later that “nearly all of the Italian fugitives end up in these parts, seeing that there is no way that they can be punished because of the weaknesses of the secular arm and because of the refuge they give to heretics as soon as they notice that anyone wants to take action against them.”<sup>123</sup> Beyond the understandable worries of papal diplomacy, the presence of so many “public heretics” also offered the opportunity to implement consolidated strategies for spiritual reconquest. Nuncio Visconti later told a judge of the Roman Holy Office that there were many who “spontaneously come to confess their errors,” so much so that the greatest worry was how to manage the “absolution and reconciliation that we give them” in the most effective way.<sup>124</sup> Naturally, the Jesuits also played a crucial

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conversion, due more to his intention to move from a Protestant State to a Catholic one, than to any ethical or spiritual motivation.

<sup>121</sup> Pucci’s letter to his brother Giovanni, 15 marzo 1584, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, p. 63.

<sup>122</sup> On Pucci’s journey from Cracow to Prague together with John Dee ed Edward Kelley see *infra* and the bibliography therein quoted.

<sup>123</sup> Letter from Prague, March 23rd, 1590, written by Alfonso Visconti, apostolic nuncio in Prague, to Cardinal of Santa Severina (ACDF, Stanza storica, TT 1a, c. 387r). On the initial stages of the diplomatic relations between Rome and Rudolph II’s imperial court, see A. Koller, “Le relazioni tra Roma e la corte imperiale agli inizi del regno di Rodolfo II. La fine della nunziatura di Delfino e l’intermezzo Portia,” in *Gli archivi della Santa Sede e il mondo asburgico nella prima età moderna*, ed. by M. Sanfilippo, A. Koller and G. Pizzorusso (Viterbo, Sette città, 2004), 147–171; for a more general overview, see the synthetic article by O. Chaline, *La curia romana e la Boemia da Rodolfo II alla Guerra dei Trent’anni*, in *ibid.*, 173–184.

<sup>124</sup> Letter of Alfonso Visconti to Monsignor Salicino, judge of the Holy Office in Rome, from Prague, December 19th, 1589, in ACDF, Stanza storica, TT 1a, c. 373r; in this letter, not even trying to hide his doubts regarding the adopted formula of abjuration (“quella che è posta nel ceremoniale non mi soddisfa interamente”), the apostolic nuncio asked his correspondent to send him “the ordinary formula of abjuration used in that tribunal” (“la forma ordinaria dell’abiurazione che sogliono fare in cotoesto tribunale”); *ibid.* The issue remained probably unresolved, as we read in a letter written a few years later by

role here. In many cases, they cultivated privileged relationships with heretics, convincing them to renounce their doctrines and return to the fold of the Holy Mother Church, before handing them over to the Nuncio for formal abjuration.<sup>125</sup> The Jesuits were able to assess the difficulties and obstacles facing their strategies of conversion more effectively than anyone else and often chose the best solutions to solve problems that arose. For example, after noticing that it was impossible to convince the Italian exiles from the Grisons "to return to Italy to seek absolution," they convinced the Nuncio to ask Rome to grant them a "license to absolve the said Italians only *in foro conscientiae*, so that they would be obliged to present themselves to the Holy Office when they returned to Italy."<sup>126</sup>

There is still much to examine regarding Pucci's long stay in Prague, such as his encounters and favourite haunts, his reading, which enabled him to extend his knowledge of religious doctrines, the backdrop to the events of his abjuration and the origin of new suspicions building up against him.<sup>127</sup> It is, however, important to stress one point in particular. There is no doubt that the question of Pucci's return to Catholicism and his abjuration in the hands of Nuncio Filippo Segu in Prague must be framed by the climate of conversion and reconciliation that characterized the religious life of the two cities in which he lived in the mid-1580s. On one hand, there was Pucci's growing anti-Protestant hostility and theological controversialist opposition, which eventually developed into deep-rooted intolerance of Lutheran and Calvinist "drunkards," while on the other hand, there was the broad strategy of spiritual reconquest deployed by members of the Society of Jesus in Central-Eastern European cities like Krakow and Prague. The combination of these factors created the conditions for his long-nurtured desire to find a "church where he

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the new nuncio, bishop of Cremona Cesare Speciano, that the "ceremonies included in the pontifical [...] were considered by some people simply too much" ("le ceremonie del pontificale [...] ad alcuni sono parse troppo"); letter to Cardinal of Santa Severina, from Prague, July 25th, 1592; *ibid.*, c. 407r.

<sup>125</sup> See, for example, the case of the Lutheran Johann Lang, "a vassal of the Marquis of Brandenburg, an esteemed man of letters and renowned preacher", who was literally dragget by the Jesuits fathers to the nuncio who had him abjure after he "asked to be restored to the bosom of Holy Mother Church" ("domandato di essere reintegrato nel grembo della santa madre Chiesa"); letter of the apostolic nuncio Cesare Speciano to the Cardinal Santa Severina, from Prague, July 25th, 1592; *ibid.*, c. 407r.

<sup>126</sup> Letter of the apostolic nuncio Cesare Speciano to the Cardinal of Santa Severina, from Prague, March 6th, 1594, *ibid.*, cc. 425 r-v.

<sup>127</sup> On Pucci's stay in Prague, see also *infra* ch. III and IV.

could rest" after "fourteen years of peregrination"<sup>128</sup> to take shape in a choice that was to leave an indelible mark on the last years of his troubled life.

## 5 Autobiography of an Encounter. John Dee and Edward Kelley

Pucci's encounter in Krakow with the English scientist John Dee and his black soul, as Luigi Firpo suggestively put it, and the charlatan and adventurer Edward Kelley<sup>129</sup> played a decisive role in guiding his choices back towards the Church of Rome.<sup>130</sup> While the factors outlined above can be defined as the 'external' causes of his conversion, or the background elements that created the conditions that prompted him to consider the step seriously, his encounter with the two Englishmen was the contingent element that ignited the spark for making the decision in his innermost being.

As we have seen, *Informatione della religione christiana* (1579) contained the first proper formulation of a messianic-millenarian concept that led Pucci back to the fold of the Church of Rome after a few years of personal torment.<sup>131</sup> In this booklet, he announced that "the Messiah" would soon arrive to "renew the age and assist His followers with His mighty arm;" on the basis of "prophetic and apostolic testimonies," which he felt could not be contested (indeed, the Roman Church was supposed to "last for 1260 years after the dissemination of Christianity in the world"), Pucci was sure of his affirmation that "it was appropriate to expect it" precisely "in these years from 1580 to 1590."<sup>132</sup> Taking the starting point as the "conversion of Constantine the Great, when the Roman world transformed into the Christian world"<sup>133</sup> (or rather "roughly the year 325, when it was founded by Constantine"),<sup>134</sup> he made a rapid calculation to predict that "its end would be very near."<sup>135</sup> Even after leaving England, Pucci continued to nurture his chiliastic and millenarian utopias. When he arrived

<sup>128</sup> "Chiesa in cui potess[e] riposar[s]i;" "14 anni di peregrinatione," *ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 20. On the two English adventurers, see Firpo, "John Dee scienziato, negromante e avventuriero," *Rinascimento* 3 (1952), 25–84.

<sup>130</sup> For a similar consideration, see also Firpo, "John Dee," 57.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. *supra* ch. 1, par. 3.

<sup>132</sup> Pucci, *Informatione della religione christiana*, 170–171.

<sup>133</sup> "Conversione di Costantino il Grande, quando il mondo romano si tramutò in mondo cristiano;" Pucci, *L'efficacia salvifica del Cristo*, ed. by G. Isozio, prodrome by E. De Mas (Tirrenia, Edizioni del Cerro, 1991), 60.

<sup>134</sup> Pucci, *Informatione della religione christiana*, 170.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

in Krakow, two years later, he had distributed a lost treatise entitled *De Biblis oculis* *occlusis, deque Elia qui ea aperturus est*, in which, repeating the prophecy of “1260 years” already formulated in the *Informatione*, he announced, following Chapter XI of *Revelation*, the arrival of “two witnesses” (divinos illos duos homines) who would bring the whole world the good news of the coming of the new era.<sup>136</sup> We do not know whether this work was written before or after his encounter with John Dee and Edward Kelley, but it is easy to imagine that Pucci was convinced that they were the two divine messengers he had announced. Dee was a scientist, mathematician, geographer and alchemist whose fortunes at the English royal court changed with the times. He was a passionate enthusiast of the obscure side of nature: Kabbalah, astrology, magic, making the philosopher’s stone and the elixir of long life formed an integral part of his research work and experience as a scholar. As a booklet published in 1564 in Antwerp with the title *Monas hieroglyphica, mathematicae, magice, cabballistice et anagogice explicata* clearly showed, his research work was grounded in a profound religious and prophetic spirit: Dee stated that he was certain of his divine investiture and was able to reveal the mysteries of the supra-celestial virtues and the arcane structures of the universe through the secrets of Kabbalah. It is certainly no coincidence that at the end of the 1560s, without neglecting his mathematical and erudite studies already underway, he started to dedicate a significant part of his time to the search for “pulverem rubrum”, the legendary projection powder needed to make gold, attempting to establish contact with the afterworld on several occasions in order to obtain decisive supernatural revelations.<sup>137</sup> When he met the alchemist and charlatan Edward Kelley in the early 1580s, the latter skilfully exploited his unsatisfied desire to acquire the secrets of the philosopher’s stone. Kelley immediately understood Dee’s pseudo-scientific aspirations and did everything necessary to put them into effect in the way that he wanted. With a long career behind him as a (presumed) transmuter of metals and a (supposed) communicator with angels, it cannot have been difficult for him to exploit his scientist friend’s credulity. As a 26-year-old Englishman with an interest in occultism, Kelley’s credentials were

<sup>136</sup> Letter from Fausto Sozzini to Matteo Radecke a Danzig, Krakow, 8 January 1586, in F. Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 172–179: 177, in which the reference to the lost treatise *De Biblis oculis* appears.

<sup>137</sup> There is a vast bibliography about John Dee. Among the most important titles, see D.E. Harkness, *John Dee’s conversations with angels. Cabala, Alchemy, and the end of Nature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999).

somewhat disreputable,<sup>138</sup> but it did not take much to convince John Dee that he had finally found the collaborator he was looking for. It was by no means the first time that Kelley had exploited his talent as a beguiler: he was skilled at taking note of aspirations, ideals, hopes and desires expressed by his 'victim' and fuelling them by speaking with the tongue of angels that he said he could 'see' and hear. Supported by his undoubted talent as a ventriloquist, Kelley was therefore perfectly able to dupe his prey. This is what happened with John Dee, as he was able to "grant" his wish to communicate with angels to acquire useful revelations for his search for the philosopher's stone, as well as with a number of other high-ranking individuals over the following months, such as the Polish Prince Laski and the Count of Rosenberg, both of whom were secretly interested in the Polish crown and were easily cajoled by Kelley (and his angels) with groundless predictions of future political success. The same technique was used on Francesco Pucci: after understanding his profound desire to end the long peregrination that had characterized the last fifteen years of his life and after listening to his hopes of finally finding a place of residence that could welcome him—in other words, his need to be welcomed back into the Holy Mother Church—Edward Kelley found the right words to incite his soul in the shape of the angel Uriel—who we shall return to shortly—in a majestic interpretation of the desires, fears, disinclinations and expectations in his innermost being.

It is now possible to reconstruct the main phases of the association between Francesco Pucci and the two Englishmen thanks to the detailed notes that John Dee kept in a personal diary after starting his séances (*actiones*).<sup>139</sup> These include their first meeting in the spring of 1585 in Krakow and their subsequent stay in Prague, where the two Englishmen tried to seduce Emperor Rudolf II with their art. Prague was also the venue of the so-called '*actio pucciana*' on 6 August 1585, the long séance in which Kelley—through the mouth of the angel Uriel—commanded Pucci to redeem himself and return to the bosom of the Holy Roman Church. All of the important moments in the months Pucci spent with the two Englishmen up to the downturn when their relationship had

<sup>138</sup> Shortly before meeting John Dee, Edward Kelley had been put in the pillory in the square of Lancaster for forgery and counterfeiting in 1580; L. Firpo, "John Dee scienziato, negromante e avventuriero," *Rinascimento*, III (1952), 25–84: 38.

<sup>139</sup> The title of the diary was *A true and faithful relation of what passed for many yeers between Dr. J. Dee... and some spirits*; Firpo, "John Dee," 26, note 6. For a facsimile reprint of the 1842 edition, cf. *The private Diary of Dr. John Dee: and the catalogue of his library of mss. from the original mss. in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and Trinity College Library, Cambridge*, edited by James Orchard Halliwell (New York, Johnson Reprint Corp., 1968).

run its course are recorded more or less faithfully in Dee's writings. However, a previously unpublished document—in the appendix—now allows us to hear a different version of the friendship directly from Dee and Kelley's “sacrificial victim.”<sup>140</sup> Pucci started his autobiographical account by writing about the wiser of the two, recalling Dee's English origins, his studies “in Latin and Greek literature, philosophy and law, and above all in all the main mathematical sciences,” his European-wide reputation, his language skills and knowledge, his ability to treat “incredible secrets” such as “the artifice of the fifth essence,” his dedication to holy letters and Kabbalistic practices, but above all the fact that he had “always lived in the Catholic way”—“but as a philosopher,” he added—, his complete personal and spiritual fulfilment in “simple and fervent prayers to God” and his ability to communicate with the “holy angels [of the Lord]” who had revealed to him “many great mysteries belonging to the end of the world and the renewal of the age.” Pucci said that this ability as a mediator with the supernatural had attracted malicious looks from his detractors, “heretics” and magicians accredited at the English court. According to his reconstruction, the latter “opponents of his” had organized the meeting with “Mr Edward Kelley, approximately 25 years old at the time and a favourite at court, for the science of magical matters,” in order to “pull him over to their side, or trick him,” or “to tempt him [...] and make him lose the reputation that he had among many of having excellent doctrines and familiarity with the elect angels.”<sup>141</sup> The encounter between John Dee and Edward Kelley therefore took place—in an account probably influenced by the version that the two Englishmen gave him—as a meeting between a pure and innocent soul (Dee) and a dark malevolent soul (Kelley), an enlightened bearer of angelic and divine messages and a magician accustomed to dealing with the devil. The former was naive, while the latter was a tempter; Pucci narrates the story of the friendship between the two Englishmen as the story of the evil temptations

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<sup>140</sup> *Informatione di Francesco Pucci all'Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Monsignore l'arcivescovo di Bari nuntio apostolico a Sua Maestà Cesarea sopra i ss. Giovanni Dee et Eduardo Kelleo inglese*; ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4185, cc. 286r–287r. As we will see further on, the autograph document can be dated to the summer of 1587 (the date 1599 added to the margin by a later hand is clearly unreliable). The document is published herein in the appendix and is hereinafter referred to as Appendix 1.

<sup>141</sup> “Nelle lettere latine e greche, nella philosophia et nelle leggi, et particolarmente in tute le principali scienze matematiche;” “molti et gran misterii appartenendi alla fine del mondo, et alla rinovatione del secolo;” “Signor Eduardo Kelleo giovane allhora di 25 anni, incirca, et favoritissimo in corte, per la scienza delle cose magiche;” “per tentarlo [...] et fargli perdere la riputazione che egli haveva appresso a molti di eccellente dottrina et d'havere familiarità con gli angoli eletti;” cf. Appendix 1.

with which Kelley tried to entrap John Dee, the resistance that the latter put up and the tormented but happy conversion of the English “magician” (Kelley) by the prophet (Dee), induced to abandon his “sprite spirits” (*spiriti folletti*) to follow the divine voice of the “angelic creatures” that “hear the secrets of the great things that must be seen in the world.”<sup>142</sup> Pucci’s naive mind never entertained the doubt that Kelley had simply noted the English scientist’s aspirations and tendencies, amplifying them and manipulating them with his uncanny ability to mystify. Neither did he suspect that the only braggart able to converse with the angels was Kelley, not Dee. The most touching parts of the story are those in which Pucci provides a first-person account of the main phases of their encounter. He recalled that their initial contact had taken place in Krakow, where “I [lived] [...] with a highly apprehensive soul, not having found a church in which I could rest in 14 years of peregrination”. It was there that he met John Dee, even though “I did not get to know him well” (*non mi intrinsecai seco*), he specified, “as they were soon called to Prague.” However, this brief encounter was enough to “appreciate the fact that Dee was a particularly spiritual person, more so than the average devout man.” For this reason, as soon as the two returned to the Polish city, Pucci wasted no time and began to “visit him and consult him more often.”<sup>143</sup> Their roles were therefore apparently extremely clear in Pucci’s head. It was Dee that was in charge as God’s enlightened messenger, while Kelley was no more than a simple collaborator that Dee had taken away from his diabolical trafficking in magic, someone that helped Dee to carry out his enlightened angelic conversations. It was, however, Kelley who—not by chance—first decided to involve the unfortunate Italian in their séances. Pucci explained:

Mr Kelley, on seeing a certain sign over my head like a smoking candle, decided that he had to involve me in a sermon I heard from them shortly before, and written by Mr Dee as usual, which dealt with the election of God and how some of the elect can lose themselves.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> “Odono i segreti delle gran cose che si deono vedere al mondo; *ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> “Io [...] con grande inquietudine d’animo, non havendo trovato;” “gustare ne propositi spirituali del signor Dee non so che si miglior sentimento che ordinario;” “visitarlo et a conferire seco, più spesso;” *ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> “Il Signor Kelleo, veduto sopra la mia testa certo segno, come d’una candela fumante, giudicò di dovermi far parte di un sermone sentito da loro poco prima, et scritto dal Signor Dee secondo il solito, nel quale era trattato della elettione di Dio, et come alcuna sorte d’eletti possono perdersi;” *ibid.*

Kelley had started to spin the web to trap his victim. The sermon “heard from them shortly before” and “written” or jotted down by Dee in his diary was the first step in a deliberate strategy aimed at ensnaring the naive Pucci. The chosen topic was significant: “how some of the elect can lose themselves.” Pucci, who saw himself as elect, had prematurely confided in his new friends about a sense of confusion (a “loss”) and the English alchemist duly reiterated the same sentiment from the mouth of angels to show that they were in perfect harmony with him, that they could interpret his moods perfectly and that they were ready to provide a suitable solution for his case. Pucci fell straight into the trap. In the sermon, he wrote “I really developed a taste for it” (*io presi gusto non picciolo*), so much so that he chose to follow them on their trip to Prague “to know more about their lives, what they had to say, their doctrines and revelations,”<sup>145</sup> or rather to check the reliability of the “spiritual sensations” that he had been feeling. It was here that the famous *actio pucciana*—a séance entirely dedicated to him—took place. Pucci remembered it with great emotion:

On the following 6 August, on being called to the oratory, I heard for about three hours Uriel the angel with great effectiveness [...] announce the next visit that the Lord wants to make to his people, admonish me for my sins, talk to me about the futility of heresies and the solidity of the Church, show me the authority of the Church, especially the power of the Roman See, unveil to me the ugliness of the Antichrist to come; invite me to return to the bosom of the Holy Mother Church, reveal the secrets of my heart and move me by a non-human hand.<sup>146</sup>

The emotion of the memory revisited and amplified the emotional nature of the experience:

Falling face downwards, with many tears and contrition, I promised to mend my ways and I was advised to collect the badly sown seeds and

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<sup>145</sup> “Per vedere più avanti nella vita, conversatione, dottrina, et rivelationi di costoro;” *ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> “Alli 6 di agosto seguente, chiamato nell’oratorio, sentii per ispatio di circa tre hore, Uriel angioletto con tanta efficacia [...] annuntiare la prossima visita che il signore vuol fare al suo popolo, ammonirmi de miei errori, discorrermi della vanità delle heresie et della saldezza della chiesa, mostrarmi l’autorità ecclesiastica et particolarmente della Romana sede, scoprirmi la bruttezza dell’Antichristo a venire; invitarmi a ritornare nel grembo della santa madre chiesa, palesarmi i secreti del mio cuore, et muovermi da mano altra che humana;” *ibid.*

attend the house and the table of the Lord, and with words of great consolation I was encouraged to follow the spiritual profession with the hope of joyous success.<sup>147</sup>

The angel Uriel's appeal had immediate devout consequences: "Therefore, after confessing and taking communion, I tried to live as a good Catholic."<sup>148</sup> A few months later, Pucci was reconciled 'in foro interiore' "through the Provincial of San Domenico,"<sup>149</sup> before obtaining absolution *in foro iudiciale* through Nuncio Filippo Segu in spring 1587.<sup>150</sup> It would naturally be difficult to understand the full meaning of his conversion and the profound reasons that guided him, without attributing due importance to two elements mentioned above. The first of these was Pucci's growing anti-Protestant hostility, his opposition of a theological and controversialist nature that took shape over the years as intolerance against the Lutheran and Calvinist "drunkards". The second factor was the extensive strategy of spiritual reconquest deployed by members of the Company of Jesus in cities in Central and Eastern Europe like Krakow and Prague. The combination of these elements created the conditions for Pucci to develop the idea of converting to Catholicism. Edward Kelley and the angel Uriel were the masterful interpreters of his feelings and his encounter with them was the trigger that persuaded him definitively of the need to take this step.

Pucci continued his account by recalling some particular episodes from their association, above all Kelley's repeated experiments to transform metal into gold using projection powder: thanks to his unlikely skills, a large number of golden rods suddenly appeared and were "sold here in Prague for approximately seven thousand ducats", as he recounted with a mix of wonder and credulity. He also commented on the sensational episode of the "notebooks and books of the revelation" with an equal blend of naivety and surprise. Kelley

<sup>147</sup> "Caduto sopra la mia faccia, con molte lacrime et compunctione promisi di emendarmi, et fui avvertito di ricogliere le male sparse semenze, et di frequentare la casa et la mensa del signore, et con parole di gran consolatione fui essortato a seguire la professione spirituale, con speranza di felice successo;" *ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> "Confessatomi et communicatomi dunque, ho poi cercato di vivere da buon catholico;" *ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Letter from Filippo Segu to Cardinal Decio Azzolini, Prague, 9 December 1586, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 192; see also the letter from Urbani to Francis I, Prague, 9 December 1586, *ibid.*, 191. Cf. also *infra*, ch. III.

<sup>150</sup> On 27 December 1586, Cardinal Decio Azzolini signed the papal authorization and on 6 March 1587, Pucci solemnly abjured in the hands of the Nuncio (the text of the abjuration is *ibid.*, 193–199).

pretended to burn these books, which had once belonged to Dee, in a stove, after feigning that angels had prompted him to do so. A few weeks later, they were found in the same place where he had pretended to set fire to them. Pucci described these events with definite emotional involvement, without any suspicion of the trickery behind the “miracles;” he saw it instead as yet more proof of the spiritual strength and effectiveness of their friendship. In his partial defence, it should be noted that John Dee was also completely caught up in Kelley’s web, which helped make everything seem more credible to Pucci.

The Florentine’s providential encounter seemed to reinforce his millenarian perspective: as before, he continued to wait for “the great visit that God wants to pay on the human race,” and the “many signs” he saw included a very clear one that God had “spoken first to his prophet servants”, namely him and his English cohorts. After his conversion, however, his prophetic expectations became perfectly compatible with a defence of the Church of Rome.

When was this account drafted and which phase of their long association does it reflect? To answer these questions, we need to return to the point where the emotional Pucci put himself in the hands of the angel Uriel—the *actio pucciana*—in August 1585. At the climax of their relationship, the three men continued to associate regularly, but the two Englishmen soon showed signs of impatience. Pucci’s money, which the English pair had taken great advantage of, was starting to run out. In this way, during their second and last *actio* held a month later, Pucci received a first farewell message from above.<sup>151</sup> When Dee and Kelley then found a new victim to exploit, their interest in Pucci diminished once and for all.<sup>152</sup> From that moment onwards, Pucci never received anything even remotely resembling a heavenly message, even though he continued to send them regular requests.<sup>153</sup> He could not accept this rapid cooling down of relations imposed by the two Englishmen; he could not imagine his daily life without the two divine messengers that had revealed the path of truth to him. The fatal attraction that connected him to the two Englishmen was stronger than any message of intolerance and hostility that they sent out. When Filippo Sega, the new Apostolic Nuncio in Prague, assumed an openly hostile stance towards them, going as far as denouncing them to Rudolf II for heresy and necromancy, and persuading him to sign a decree to ban them from

<sup>151</sup> The message was only thinly veiled by a prophetic perspective: “Go forth Pucci, and take action to fulfil your promises” (“Vada Pucci, e provveda ad adempiere le promesse”), the three heard from the latest angelic voice (L. Firpo, “John Dee,” 58).

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

the Empire,<sup>154</sup> Pucci openly defended them. The Nuncio tried to convince Pucci to see things his way. Filippo Sega's position, reflecting the stance of Rome, was that the inner certainty of those who saw or heard divine and supernatural messages did not have to be subject to Church approval, as long as their revelations remained in the private sphere. However, if the question entered the public domain and the depositary of the revelations started to present himself publicly as a prophet educated or sent by God—as the two Englishmen had—the divine inspiration would have to be closely examined by the Roman authorities and validation from the Church authority became indispensable.<sup>155</sup> It is possible, even probable, that these issues had already taken hold of Pucci's soul, shortly after the reconciliation 'in foro interiore' in the hands of his confessor, the Provincial of San Domenico. It is equally probable, however, that Pucci had not fully understood the Nuncio's plan—he firmly intended to get his hands on the two Englishmen to follow up the accusations of heresy and necromancy that he had used to denounce them to the Emperor. Sega used Francesco Pucci as bait to send false promises of reconciliation to the two Englishmen, who were in exile at the Count of Rosenberg's castle at the time. Dee and Kelley did not fall for it; already piqued with their old associate, who they now considered an impediment to their work, they immediately harboured suspicions about Pucci and his complicity with the Nuncio and were sceptical about their advances.<sup>156</sup> Relations between the three men became increasingly tense. However, despite the growing bitterness in the arguments with his former associates,<sup>157</sup> Pucci continued to defend their reputation to the Nuncio.<sup>158</sup> Thanks to them, he had finally found the strength to make a choice he had been dreaming of for a long time: the decision to return to the Catholic fold, which he had previously lacked the courage to carry out. The memory of the beneficial spiritual effects obtained from his intense association with the English pair was decidedly stronger than any insinuation or sign of hostility from the Church authorities. Pucci continued to feel closely bound to the fate of the two Englishmen. For their part, the Church authorities did not stop exploiting him as a source of information about the devious couple. Therefore, when Filippo Sega was preparing to be replaced by Antonio Puteo,

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. the letter from Pucci to Dee and Kelley of 18 August 1586, in *A true and faithful relation of what passed for many years between Dr. J. Dee... and some spirits*, London, 1659, 436–443; L. Firpo, "John Dee," 68–70.

<sup>156</sup> L. Firpo, "John Dee," 63.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

the Bishop of Bari, in May 1587, he warned him about the worrying presence of "Giovanni Dii and Kilio Zoppo" and indicated Francesco Pucci as the person able to provide the most up-to-date news about their circumstances, writing to him: "You will be able to judge events after discovering them and hearing about them in the report by Francesco Pucci, who is well-informed about everything that happened."<sup>159</sup> It is extremely likely that Pucci's spirited autobiographical account of his encounter with the English scientist and the charlatan—analysed above, which had the significant title *Informatione all'Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Monsignore l'arcivescovo di Bari nuntio apostolico a Sua Maestà Cesarea sopra i ss. Giovanni Dee et Eduardo Kelleo inglese*—was written to satisfy the new Nuncio's requests.<sup>160</sup> As we have seen, the tone of the *Informatione* was clearly apologetic, at times even passionate. But how long could this grand illusion last? How many warnings from the Catholic authorities would he have to hear and how many hostile acts from his former associates would he need to be subjected to before starting to question the hard and fast certainties of his beliefs? Over the following years, Pucci continued to defend their profound religiousness, good faith and closeness to the divine realm with their extraordinary powers of conversing with the supernatural, even when presented with evidence to the contrary. Denying all this would have meant not only repudiating the genuineness of the divine inspiration that had prompted him to return to the bosom of the Catholic Church,<sup>161</sup> but also renouncing the enormous emotional, psychological and spiritual investment he had made in their friendship. Gradually, however, he started to take stock of the advice and warnings he received and doubt slowly took the place of certainty, just as caution replaced the grand illusion. Pucci continued to have contradictory feelings until the end and the onset of his long-term inner torment reflected the profound ambiguity of his state of mind.

The first vague signals of a rethink emerged from the final lines of the *Informatione*, where he concluded: "With all due reverence and humility I exhort Your Most Illustrious and Reverend Excellency to treat this matter with maximum charity and discretion." He then added: "you will only have to make a sign and I will be ready for any order from you. As I have done everything for them, considering them to be friends and servants of God, if someone were to convince them of the opposite by strength of reason, I would like to be one of

<sup>159</sup> 'Da quel ch'ella anderà scoprendo e potrà intendere da un Francesco Pucci fiorentino, informato di tutto il successo, giudicherà'; *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland*, ed. by R. Reichenberger (Paderborn, 1905), 424; L. Firpo, "John Dee," 75.

<sup>160</sup> Appendix 1.

<sup>161</sup> Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 98.

the first to go against them.”<sup>162</sup> For the first time, Pucci admitted, albeit incidentally, the possibility that a truth might emerge that was different from the one he had previously expected. Perhaps also as a result of the crack that had opened for the first time in the recesses of his soul, Pucci paid greater attention to the new Nuncio’s “plans” and strategies.<sup>163</sup> Antonio Puteo’s perspective was not so different from that of his predecessor: he wanted to exploit the collaboration with Pucci to “catch” (abboccare) the two Englishmen, who were staying as the Count of Rosenberg’s guests at Trebau castle at the time. Pucci wrote about it to his mother: “Since they expressed a desire for the father [Pucci’s confessor], who is a talented theologian and preacher, to catch the two Englishmen [...] I have not spared any effort or expense in carrying through the plan.” He agreed to take part in the plan, not from a spirit of servility towards the ecclesiastical authorities, but from a sense of personal duty, a heartfelt need for clarification. He wrote to his mother that he hoped “that in this way this negotiation will lead to disclosures and that I will have better grounds for distancing myself from them or staying close to them, as I have done so far.”<sup>164</sup> The word caution became an important part of his vocabulary: “The visions and revelations of these people—he wrote, showing that he had finally understood the sense of Filippo Sega’s warnings—must not be approved or scorned without reason and I, in particular, am obliged to examine the matter carefully, as I have not seen good effects on myself.”<sup>165</sup>

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162 “Essorto con ogni humiltà et reverenza V.S. Ill.ma et R.ma che pigli trattare quel negotio con somma carità et discretione;” “non havrà se non a fare un cenno che sarò pronto ad ogni suo comandamento. Perché si come non è cosa che io non facessi per costoro, essendo servi et amici di Dio, così se fussero, per ragione, convinti del contrario, vorrei essere de primi a farli contro;” Appendix 1.

163 After rashly telling his family that he was coming home, supposedly at the end of June (Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 94), Pucci was forced to backtrack. Faced with the disappointment of his mother, who could now no longer welcome back her son after more than 15 years’ absence, he felt obliged to justify the fact that he was staying on in Prague, alluding to a matter that was still keeping him away from Italy regarding “two of my English brethren” (“due miei fratelli inglesi”); letter of 28 July 1587, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 96.

164 “Essendo parso a loro bene che questo padre, il quale è valente teologo e predicatore, si abbocchi con essi Inglesi [...] io non ho risparmiato né fatica né spesa per far che il disegno dia colorito;” “che per questo mezzo si scuoprirà più avanti in questo negozio e che io potrò con migliore fondamento allontanarmi da loro o pur tenermi sì presso, come ho fatto fino ad ora;” *ibid.*

165 ‘Le visioni e rivelazioni di costoro sì come non deono essere leggiermente approvate, così non si deono senza cagione disprezzare, e io particolarmente, che non ho veduto in me stesso buoni effetti, sono tenuto ad esaminare la cosa accuratamente’; *ibid.*

In the meantime, the “plan” implemented by the Nuncio was still underway and a year later “my confessor’s plan to catch these Englishmen”<sup>166</sup> was far from completion. During these long months, Pucci’s relationship with the English pair deteriorated more and more until it reached a definitive breaking point, naturally determined by Dee and Kelley.<sup>167</sup> In the spring of 1588, Pucci left the lives of the two Englishmen once and for all and their seven-year association reached its conclusion.<sup>168</sup> Dee and Kelley went their separate ways, with the former returning to England and the latter staying on in Prague to seek fresh fortune. However, Pucci could not forget his “divine messengers”. Although their association had been sharply interrupted (and in a one-sided way), his soul was still tormented by doubt: “I am behaving in such a way that if the sad truth were revealed that the two Englishmen were imposters, I could not reasonably be considered responsible in any way.”<sup>169</sup> The “sad truth” about the pair was now a reality to be reckoned with, but the gathering clouds of suspicion and accusation about the two alchemists also risked discrediting his past. The accusations made against them by the ecclesiastical authorities could have had negative repercussions on his recent relations with Rome; Pucci had finally become aware of the strong emotional charge at stake: “I need patience and time to clarify to myself and others, because just as I got close to them without sensible consideration and advice and I cannot regret the spiritual fruit that I picked, I also cannot distance myself from them entirely without the right reason and good opportunity.”<sup>170</sup> Pucci was now tormented more than ever by his attempt to evaluate the “pros and cons in this case”, “the good or bad intentions of this group,” torn between the desire to see “the right vendetta against these people” if they were discovered to be “charlatans” (giuntatori) and the instinct to give them all the honours they deserved if he managed to demonstrate to himself, before showing the Nuncio, that they were “singular men of God, just as they claim”, as he had firmly believed before.<sup>171</sup> A few months later at the end of 1588, Pucci was still locked in the grip of his conscience, oppressed by

<sup>166</sup> “Quella pratica d’abboccare il mio confessore con questi Inglesi;” letter of 18 August 1587 from Prague to his brother Giovanni, *ibid.*, 100.

<sup>167</sup> Firpo, “John Dee,” 76–77.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 77–83.

<sup>169</sup> “Vo [...] procedendo e governandomi in modo che io non abbia ad avere giustamente carico, se quei miei Inglesi facessero trista riuscita;” Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 102.

<sup>170</sup> “Ho bisogno di pazienza e di tempo per chiarire me e altri, perché, si come non mi sono accostato loro senza matura considerazione e consiglio e non ho da pentirmi del frutto spirituale che ne ho colto, così non posso discostarmene interamente senza giusta cagione e buona occasione;” *ibid.*, 102–103.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

an undertaking that seemed to be too arduous for him.<sup>172</sup> While Kelley was in and out of prison in Prague and Dee faced the hostility and suspicion deriving from his consolidated reputation as a necromancer, Pucci continued to struggle with his predicament. What could he do to solve his increasingly crippling inner dilemma? Just two years later in January 1591, Pucci finally seemed to have reached a detached state of mind. Seven years after their first meeting, he managed to view the two Englishmen with the dispassionate perspective of an onlooker. He wrote the following to his brother Giovanni from Prague: "Now I am well withdrawn from them and I will see the progress of their life, as they are still people who are spoken about a lot, and I am certain that God will reward each of them as He sees fit."<sup>173</sup> He had enough evidence to form a negative—even a harsh—opinion of the illusions that had fed their association and had every right to condemn Kelley at the very least, but he could not bring himself to do so; it was enough to have cut the umbilical cord linking him to his former associates. The important thing for him at this point was to preserve the meaning and memory of their encounter: "I have nothing to regret about this experience,—he wrote again to his brother—because it may well be very useful to me in the future, and so far, all things considered, I thank God that I have only obtained spiritual benefit from my association with them."<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> "A lot of things could be said for and against those English friends of mine" ("Di que' miei amici inglesi si possono dire tante cose pro e contro"), he wrote to his brother Giovanni from Prague on 20 December 1588, *ibid.*, 105.

<sup>173</sup> "Ora mi sono bellamente ritirato da loro e starò a vedere il progresso della loro vita, essendo persone da farsi ancora molto nominare, e sono certo che Dio renderà ad ognuno secondo l'intenzione sua;" see his letter of 8 January 1591, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 130.

<sup>174</sup> "Né io ho da pentirmi d'aver fatta questa prova, perché potrà molto servirmi in avenir, e fino al presente, computato tutto, ringrazio Dio che della compagnia loro non ho cavato se non profitto spirituale." Achieving his aim of dissociating himself from the two Englishmen allowed him to open his eyes for the first time to the "singular ingratitude" of at least one of the two ("the richest"); *ibid.*

# At the Gates of Paris: Henry IV and the Roman Inquisition

## 1 From Reconciliation to Flight

As we have seen in the previous chapter, on 9 December 1586, the Apostolic Nuncio in Prague, Filippo Segu, wrote to Cardinal Decio Azzolini, Sixtus V's Secretary of State, announcing his intention to allow the formal readmission of the heartfelt penitent Francesco Pucci to the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> This appeared to be the crowning of a dream, the completion of a journey, or the closing of a circle. However, less than three years later, on 2 October 1589, Segu's successor Alfonso Visconti reported, as if nothing had happened, the presence of "a certain Francesco Pucci, a man who has been through almost all the heretical sects and in England," suggesting that he should be imprisoned with as little ado as possible.<sup>2</sup> In just three years, the judgement of the Papal Nunciature in Prague regarding Pucci had changed radically. So what had happened? After vigorously seeking and then obtaining his return to the Catholic Church, Pucci continued to profess the same doctrines that had brought him to the attention of the authorities in Rome years before as "a man of evil spirit". In the space of a few months, the growing distrust of the new Nuncio Alfonso Visconti and the Tuscan Ambassador Francesco Lenzoni, along with the hostility of the Jesuits in Prague, forced him to take flight once again.<sup>3</sup> It is hard to say what

<sup>1</sup> R. Reichenberger, ed., *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland 1585 (1584)–1590*, II Abt., I Halfte (Paderborn 1905), 349, footnote 1. On Decio Azzolini, Sixtus V's Secretary of State, see G. De Caro's entry in DBI, vol. IV, pp. 767–68. On the apostolic nuncio Filippo Segu, see C. Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, III, (Monasterii, Sumpitus et typis librariae regensbergianae, 1910), 293. On his nunciature at Philip II's court see A. Fernández Collado, *Gregorio XIII y Felipe II en la nunciatura de Felipe Segu 1577–1581* (Toledo, Kadmos, 1991). On the two different moments which characterized Pucci's return to the Catholic Church, the reconciliation 'in foro interiore' "per mezzo del Provinciale di S. Domenico" at the end of 1585, and his secret abjuration and reconciliation "in foro esteriore" thanks to the papal nuncio Filippo Segu in 1587, cf. *infra*, ch. IV.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Alfonso Visconti to Cardinal Montalto (Alessandro Peretti Damasceni), nephew and Secretary of State to Pope Sixtus V, October 2nd, 1589, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 206–207.

<sup>3</sup> On these events, see more generally *infra*, ch. IV. Pucci himself told of the hostility shown against him by one Jesuit in particular, in a letter written from Nuremberg in November 1592

drove Pucci to behave in such a way as to attract the hostility of the ecclesiastical authorities once again; naivety, arrogance, or possibly a mixture of the two. However, above all, his view of reality was coloured by the firm conviction that he was the depository of divine truths that would save Christianity. The sincerity of his conversion does not appear to be in doubt. Apart from the deep-rooted motives (his anti-Protestant sensitivity, his universalistic concept of the Catholic Church, the contagious climate of religious conversions encountered in Krakow and Prague) and the contingent reasons (fear of losing his family inheritance) that inspired his choice, the crux of the matter lay in the prophetic mission which he felt was his. He could not betray his original inspiration or the doctrines that he felt he was safeguarding, because they had been suggested to him directly from above; anyone opposing his message opposed the destiny of the regeneration of Christianity, because this was the salvific and universal mission that he had been summoned to perform. From his standpoint, the question of doctrinal orthodoxy and confessional affinity were meaningless obstacles thwarting the realization of his project, marginal aspects that could not modify his plan to convince the Pope of the validity of his proposal.

Somewhat predictably, his forced flight made him feel profound resentment.<sup>4</sup> He was convinced that he was the victim of unjust persecution and could not forget the “strange acts of inhumanity” to which “he had been subjected in previous years in Prague by the Apostolic Nuncio.”<sup>5</sup>

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to a friend living in Prague (cf. Firpo, *Scritti*, 331–336: p. 332). He is most likely the same Jesuit mentioned by the papal nuncio Alfonso Visconti in the already quoted letter to Cardinal Montalto, where we can read of “a father theologian belonging to the Company of Jesus, who warned me that [Pucci] has written a book about justification full of errors and heresies, that he is willing to publish” (“un padre teologo della Compagnia di Gesù, il quale mi ha avertito che ha scritto un’opra de iustificatione, che vol mandare in luce, piena di molti errori ed eresie”); Pucci, *Lettere*, II, p. 207. The reference is most likely to a manuscript copy of Pucci’s *De praedestinatione*. For the identification of the aforementioned Jesuit with Giovanni Aquense, future confessor to the archduke Maximilian of Habsburg, see Firpo, *Scritti*, 136 footnote 4.

4 See also E. Barnavi and M. Eliav-Feldon, *Le périple de Francesco Pucci. Utopie, hérésie et vérité religieuse dans la Renaissance tardive* (Paris, Hachette, 1988), 211. On these three years and especially on how Rome and Florence changed their mind about Pucci, we shall return in the next chapter.

5 Letter to Paolo Camillo Sfondrati, Frankfurt, August 7th, 1591 (ACDF, Stanza Storica, L6-n, c. 24r). On these inhumanities (“inhumanità”) Pucci went back at the end of his long letter addressed to Pope Gregory XIV (*ibid.*, c. 52r). For a detailed description of the three documents discovered in the Roman Inquisitorial Archives, one of which is the already mentioned letter to Pope Gregory XIV, see Caravale, “Inediti di Francesco Pucci presso l’Archivio del Sant’Uffizio,” *Il Pensiero politico* 32 (1999), n. 1, 69–82. For a first edition of these texts, see

Indeed, his next moves were inspired by his desire to redeem these iniquitous “dishonours”. His first instinctive reaction was to appeal directly to papal authority. The accusations came from Catholic circles and the Pope, more than anyone, had the authority to put a stop to them; after all, he was the indisputable leader of the confession that Pucci still claimed to belong to. His utopia was that of an inspired *theodidactus*; he was convinced that he could persuade the then Pope Gregory XIV that he was right. Above all though, his universalistic dream of a universal council and the general reconciliation of believers could not disregard the approval of the self-proclaimed head of the universal Catholic Church. Pucci’s decision to turn to the Pope thus reflected a universalistic dream that could not exclude the upper echelons in Rome. Put simply, no dream of a Council would ever be fulfilled without the Pope’s consent and Henry IV—to whom Pucci was willing to address—would not be able to bring about his conciliarist projects.

## 2 Pucci’s Millenarianism

While in Frankfurt, during a break in a journey that eventually took him to Paris,<sup>6</sup> Pucci sent two long heart-felt letters to the new Cardinal Nephew Paolo Camillo Sfondrati in Rome.<sup>7</sup> He counted on using this connection so that the Pope could hear his words directly: “I therefore send these papers to your most illustrious and most reverend Lordship and beg you to show them to His Beatitude, as these ideas and opinions will not be scorned by spiritual persons

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A.E. Baldini, “Tre inediti di Francesco Pucci al cardinal nipote e a Gregorio XIV alla vigilia del suo ‘rientro’ a Roma” (henceforth quoted as Baldini’s edition), *Rinascimento* 39 (1999), 157–223.

6 Barnavi and Eliav-Feldon alluded to a brief stop in Frankfurt during Pucci’s journey from Prague to Amsterdam, even though they did not cite any documentary source (*Le périple*, 216). In Frankfurt Pucci most likely purchased his copy of Samuel Huber’s *Theses*; cf. also *supra*, ch. II. On his last stay in Paris, cf. *infra*, ch. IV.

7 On Paolo Camillo Sfondrati, Gregory XIV’s nephew, future member of the Congregation of the Index, cardinal from December 19th, 1590, a few days after Niccolò Sfondrati’s papal coronation on December 8th, 1590, see C. Eubel, W. van Gulik, *Hierarchia catholica medi et recentioris aevi*, 3 (Monasterii, sumptibus et typis Librariae Regensbergianae, 1923), 60. On his close connection with the environment of the Vallicella, see A. Cistellini, *San Filippo Neri, l’Oratorio e la Congregazione oratoriana. Storia e spiritualità*, 3 vols., Brescia, Morcelliana, 1989, *passim*. On Sfondrati’s activity within the Congregation of the Index see G. Fragnito, *La Bibbia al rogo, ad indicem*; and eadem, *Proibito capire, ad indicem*.

who love God.”<sup>8</sup> Pucci did not only want to show Gregory XIV and his nephew how much he resented his ill treatment in Prague, but also his doctrinal and political designs. He tried to do this by presenting his intentions as clearly as possible, namely his decision to go to Paris, his desire to meet Henry IV and the corresponding hopes he entertained. “I hope to be in France within a few weeks,” he wrote in his letter to Cardinal Sfondrati on 7 August 1591, “in order to serve the Catholic cause to the best of my ability, and here I shall act, with regard to the question of whether to publish these writings or not, as and how the Lord, on whom I rely above all, may inspire me.”<sup>9</sup> It was no easy task to obtain the approval of someone who had been steadfastly hostile towards the new King of France since the start of his papacy. Despite Pucci’s firm intention to obtain the Pope’s approval, he was well aware of his stance and his letters soon took on a reproachful tone towards his policy. Behind the veil of a quiet willingness to discuss his doctrines with any religious or theological authority suggested by the Pope,<sup>10</sup> he made his position clear in the long “writing” addressed to the Jews enclosed with his letter;<sup>11</sup> the combination of inspired messianic prophetism and the more political aspects of his proposal found an ideal common reference point in the figure of Henry IV. He felt that this “great King, who so ardently devoted all his strength of mind to religion and to the Holy Council, and is embellished by faith and power,”<sup>12</sup> would soon be the “standard” under which all the “Israelites” in the world would gather in view of the imminent coming of the “kingdom of Christ”. At the “celestial consistory” held by Christ after his second coming on Earth, the entire Hebrew population would convert to Catholicism.<sup>13</sup> To pave the way for this to happen, it was

8 Letter to Paolo Camillo Sfondrati; on Pope Gregory XIV, his ecclesiastical career and his short pontificate, see the biography by L. Castano, *Gregorio XIV (Niccolò Sfondrati) 1535–1591* (Turino, Società Editrice internazionale, 1957), as well as the recent entry by A. Borromeo, in *Enciclopedia dei papi*, 3 vols. (Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000), 3, 230–240.

9 Letter to Paolo Camillo Sfondrati.

10 *Ibid.*

11 The long letter written in vernacular (preserved *ibid.*, cc. 25r–36v) is likely to be identified with the “letter I wrote to the Jews last year” (“lettera, che io scrissi agli ebrei l’anno passato”), to which Pucci himself made reference in a letter addressed to a friend in Prague; see the letter from Salzburg, January 8th, 1593, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 340–343: 342. Until now this document was considered missing.

12 ACDF, St. st., L6-n, c. 35r; Baldini’s edition, 186.

13 Pucci had already dealt with these topics in other works which remained in manuscript: the *De regno Christi* (of which Cantimori published only a few paragraphs in *Per la storia degli eretici italiani del secolo XVI in Europa*, 138–140); his “venti canti in ottave rime” of

necessary to clear up some misunderstandings. The main obstacle on the road to reconciliation between the two peoples was, one might say, purely formal. The obtuse attachment to “obscure terms and names” ran the risk of turning faith and religion “into a credulity of misunderstood words”, “into a blind imitation of our kinsfolk and our ministers”<sup>14</sup> Pucci invited the Jews not to be shocked by “words such as Trinity and the like, which are poorly understood by ourselves and many other people, and which you sometimes hear coming from the mouths of Christians who understand little and are not very cautious”,<sup>15</sup> because these terms had entered the Christian language mainly due to a reaction against the heretical doctrines that denied “the eternity of the wisdom of God”. In the near future, Pucci continued, it would be necessary to proceed “with absolute clarity and simplicity” of language, so that many common doctrinal points could finally be revealed to everyone, making reconciliation between the two religions almost inevitable. Thus, in one of his most inspired appeals to the Jews to convert, Pucci listed the doctrines and beliefs that brought them closer Catholics. He even included, with possibly excessively ecumenical enthusiasm, the unlikely fact—for the Jews—that Mary was a virgin:

And you already agree with us Christians that we should profess one God alone, the Creator of Heaven and Earth; that we remember and celebrate the creation every seventh day; accept and approve the books of Moses; that we sing the psalms of David, as divine songs; that we believe the Lord Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary; that we recognize Him by the word and breath of God as the great prophet and promised Messiah; that we state he sits gloriously in heaven to the right of God; that we await him as the judge of each and every man according to his works; that we punish severely all those who blaspheme and that we preach that the purpose of religion consists of doing unto others as one would do unto oneself.<sup>16</sup>

The reconciliation of the peoples was thus described by Pucci as the natural consequence of a desired return to the original purity of the Christian doctrine. The corruption of this original purity had distanced Jews and Catholics; it needed to be restored to favour a new conciliation after so many centuries. The conversion of the Jewish people, which Pucci hoped for as Christ's

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*Del regno di Cristo*, totally unpublished (cf. Firpo, *Scritti*, 33–34); and his *Forma d'una repubblica catholica*, on which cf. *supra*, ch. II.

<sup>14</sup> ACDF, St. st. L6-n, c. 26r; Baldini's edition, 170.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 33v; Baldini's edition, 183.

celestial consistory approached, did not seem to imply the abandonment and repudiation of Judaism, according to the consolidated system of Christian millenarianism; it took shape instead as the acquisition of new awareness of the common historical roots shared by Christians and Jews, a joint doctrinal stock referenced to restore the lost unity of God's people. Pucci deliberately ignored the Trinitarian question when stressing the traits shared by the Jewish and Catholic religions, and never discussed the dogma of the Trinity—the weighty mass that had widened the rift between Jews and Catholics since the Council of Nicea. We know that Pucci did not share the antitrinitarian positions that other Italian heretics maintained.<sup>17</sup> However, the dogma was treated as one of the doctrinal questions that were not essential for salvation; it was one of those points that had to be ignored for the sake of a higher common objective—religious tolerance—as there was no agreement between the two religions. In a similar way, although not so explicitly as Sebastian Castellio, Giacomo Acontius and Giacomo Paleologus,<sup>18</sup> Pucci suggested an encounter between Christians and Jews based on a few shared doctrinal questions, making a very clear connection between millenarianism and religious latitudinarianism.

In this sense, his millenarianism echoed the positions defended a few decades previously by Celio Secondo Curione and was part of a tradition founded by Martin Borrhaus and Wolfgang Capitone. In Borrhaus's first important youthful work (*De operibus Dei*, 1527), published with an introduction by Capitone, he had developed an eschatological vision, a three-part view of the history of Christianity that closely recalled the Trinitarian division made by

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<sup>17</sup> Pucci had started his letter to the Jews with an implicit statement of trinitarian faith; ACDF, Stanza storica, L6-n, c. 25r; Baldini's edition, 168. For a similar statement, see also Pucci, *Informatione*, 13. According to my interpretation there are no doubts about Pucci's orthodoxy with reference to the dogma of the Trinity. Luigi Firpo (*Scritti*, 203) had the same opinion. Cantimori had a different position; see his *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento e altri scritti*, ed. by A. Prosperi (Turin, Einaudi, 1992; first edition 1939), 372–373.

<sup>18</sup> On Castellio, see at least the intellectual biography by H.R. Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio, 1515–1563. Humanist and Defender of Religious Toleration in a Confessional Age* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003; first German edition 1997). On Aconcio, see C. O'Malley, *Iacopo Aconcio*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1955 and more recently G. Caravale, *Storia di una doppia censura. Gli Stratagemmi di Satanadi Giacomo Aconcio nell'Europa del Seicento* (Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2013); on Giacomo da Chio, cf. at least L. Szczucki, "Le dottrine ereticali di Giacomo da Chio Paleologo," *Rinascimento* 11 (1971), 27–75. For further bibliography on these three figures, see the entries in *The Italian Reformation*, respectively at the pp. 169–182, 107–115, 381–384.

Gioacchino da Fiore.<sup>19</sup> He felt that the Second Advent marked the beginning of Christ's spiritual kingdom, governed by evangelical laws and characterized by justice, mutual charity and peace, an extensive kingdom open to all, where both "Israel in accordance with the promise" and "carnal Israel" would reunite under their only minister and saviour: Christ. The idea of universal salvation that Borrhaus reached from clearly predestinationist premises therefore also included the Jewish people, with whom Christians shared a common destiny—both had experienced divine election and rejection, illumination and blinding, ignominy and glory, and both were destined to enter the kingdom of the Messiah. God would stipulate a new pact with his children and all Jews would be reconciled with the Father and convert to Christ, together with the "whole people" ("plenitudo gentium"): the *renovatio orbis*, the creation of the new spiritual and terrestrial dimension of the world which, "as all predicted in their hearts", would coincide with the renewal of the Church and all humanity through universal conversion to the Messiah, who would not reign for a thousand years, but for "centuries."<sup>20</sup> In this way, just as Pucci indissolubly linked the millenarian dimension of his thinking to the King of France's political and religious project, Borrhaus had linked the prophecy of imminent universal reconciliation around Christ to a political and religious project centred around Emperor Charles V in a 1539 work (*In Salomonis [...] concionem [...] commentarius*) conceived at the height of the irenic period of colloquies on religion. The Emperor was given the task of resolving the conflicts tearing apart Christianity and promoting religious harmony.<sup>21</sup>

Celio Secondo Curione revisited Borrhaus's millenarian model of the second coming. He wrote of a middle return between the coming of the Incarnate

<sup>19</sup> After the First Coming of the Messiah and the preaching of the Word as well as after the stipulation of the spiritual agreement interrupted by the long supremacy of the Antichrist, the beginning of the Reformation coincided—according to Borrhaus—with the Second Coming, that is with the twofold revelation of the Gospel and the Antichrist bringing back to earth the light of the Gospel in view of the last glorious coming of the Messiah; see L. Felici, *Tra Riforma ed eresia. La giovinezza di Martin Borrhaus 1499–1528* (Florence, Olschki, 1995), 131 and, above all, A. Seifert, "Reformation und Chiliasmus. Die Rolle des Martin Cellarius-Borrhaus," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 67 (1986), 226–264: 254–55 on Borrhaus as Curione's forerunner. For a general overview on millenarianism in Early Modern Europe, see the four fundamental volumes collected by Richard Popkin and others under the title *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, 4 vols. (Dordrecht, Boston, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> L. Felici, *Tra Riforma ed eresia*, 132–133. On the similarities between Capito and Borrhaus regarding eschatological issues, cf. also *ibid.*, 164–166.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

Son and the final return at the time of judgement, when the beginning of the millennium would coincide with the third phase of the history of redemption, after the first phase with Jesus and the Apostles, and the second phase—the age of the Antichrist—with its arsenal of popes, Masses and Purgatory, as well as the Talmud and Islam.<sup>22</sup> According to Curione, the second coming would help reform the Church and lead humanity towards salvation; God's mercy could certainly not exclude the Jews, Muslims or pagans in recently discovered parts of the world.<sup>23</sup> As all religions had misinterpreted an original body of revelation, it was not illogical that all of them should take part in the *restitutio* of true Christianity, which was distinguished by its spirituality and simplicity.<sup>24</sup>

Pucci used his letter to the Jews to announce his messianic project in very similar terms: Christ “is about to return to visit his Earth and his family, as the Almighty Father wishes to bring him back there and invest him with His highest pontificate and kingdom”. Jews and Muslims would have to abandon all forms of opposition to Christianity and thus pave the way for the “Consistory, Council or Court” which the “Almighty Father” would soon convene at the time of the second coming of the Son of God. Pucci reminded the Turks of their common lineage from “Holy Father Abraham” and the destiny of reconciliation awaiting them: “You shall cling together in charity with the discreet Christians and with the Jews, who will gather together from all four corners of the world, and all will grow together in a body of religion and a republic governed and ruled by God.” To the many “Israelites and Jews” in the “kingdoms of Spain and Portugal”, forced into baptism by the Catholic authorities but still painfully aware of their

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<sup>22</sup> P. Bietenholz, “Millenarismo ed età dell'oro nell'opera di Celio Secondo Curione,” in L. Secchi Tarugi, ed., *Millenarismo ed età dell'oro nel Rinascimento* (Florence, 2003), 51–64: 56.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 58–59. On how Curione's plea for the amplitude of God's benevolence accorded with his committed defence of reformed predestination, in other words on his idea of *amplitudo regni Dei* as a natural outcome of a “universalistic development of predestinationism”, see L. D'Ascia, “Celio Secondo Curione, erasmista o antierasmista?,” in A. Olivieri, ed., *Erasmo, Venezia e la cultura padana nel '500* (Rovigo, Minelliana, 1995), 209–223: 216–219, quotation at p. 217. On the issue of the salvation of the unfaithful, see L. Capéran, *Le problème du salut des infidèles*, 2 vols. (Paris, G. Beauchesne, 1912); and R. Romeo, *Le scoperte americane nella coscienza italiana del Cinquecento* (Milan-Naples, Ricciardi, 1954), 43–55.

<sup>24</sup> According to his interpretation, the Jews would be the last people to convert, following the other pagans; after that, the historical cycle would conclude and the end of history would coincide with the last coming of the judging Christ. The collective conversion of all the Jews, as announced in Saint Paul's letter to the Romans (11, 25–26) would be the fundamental event of Christ's millenarian kingdom; see L. D'Ascia, “Curione e gli ebrei,” *Rinascimento* 37 (1997), 341–355: 351.

origins and homeland, he announced the re-awakening that would follow “the arrival of the Almighty Father and the sounding of God’s trumpets”. He was sure that “when they hear a form of Christianity being proposed that is not unlike their own ancient laws and customs and they will be called back to their homeland,” then “all the discreet men among them will celebrate at length and be in agreement with the Moors in those kingdoms, who likewise are held in a form of enforced Christianity, [...] and they cannot but be happy and console themselves” before the merciful and charitable soul of Christ. Saracens, Turks and Moors, *conversos* and *moriscos*, as well as “Indians” and “Chinese” would therefore all find themselves in that “marvellous kingdom that God wishes to create on Earth.” In this way, the happy millennium would finally begin at the end of the final clash between “Christ and Satan”, between the “faithful nations and the antichristian sects”: “Those years of gold, that divine age, [...] this most happy reign [...] will last a thousand years, at the end of which Satan will be unleashed again for a short time and, after making his final efforts with all his followers, all of God’s adversaries will be miraculously defeated and crushed.”<sup>25</sup>

The announcement of the golden age and the happy millennium—the creation of the Kingdom of God on Earth—led to Borrhaus and Curione being accused of Chiliasm by the main representatives of the Reformation. This insistence on the literal interpretation of the messianic prophecies, which had already been defined as erroneous and illusory by the Council of Ephesus in 431, had acquired new revolutionary vigour through Thomas Müntzer in the mid-1520s and found its most radical interpretation in 1534 with the proclamation of the mark of Zion and celestial Jerusalem and the establishment of a reign of apocalyptic terror by a Dutch extremist group in Münster in Westphalia.<sup>26</sup> With their messianic expectations, Borrhaus and Curione were seen by the masters of the Reformation (not least Luther) as reworking the same dangerous doctrines that had fuelled those tragic experiences. According to Bullinger, for example, the interval of one thousand idyllic golden years before the universal judgement was a dangerous spectre, because it beguiled the faithful and

<sup>25</sup> ACDF, St. st, L6-n, cc. 33v–34v; Baldini’s edition, 183–185. Prosperi also focused his attention on these passages in *L’eresia del Libro grande. Storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta* (Milan, Feltrinelli, 2000), 370–371.

<sup>26</sup> On chiliasm and the Reformation, see G. List, *Chiliastische Utopie und Radikale Reformation. Die Erneuerung der Idee vom Tausendjährigen Reich im 16. Jahrhundert* (Munich, Fink, 1973); and E. Kunz, “Protestantische Eschatologie von der Reformation bis zur Aufklärung,” in M. Schmaus u.a., (Hgg.), *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV/7c, 1. Teil (Freiburg, Herder, 1980).

induced a false feeling of tranquillity. Instead, speaking emphatically about the imminence of the universal judgement would enable the religious authorities to maintain the right level of moral and spiritual tension among believers.<sup>27</sup> Butzer claimed that their concept of the divine kingdom clouded the meaning of Christ's redemption and deprived Christians of the wait for the first resurrection, foreseeing happiness for the *sancti posteriores* (later saints) that neither Christ nor the *sancti priores* (previous saints) would have experienced. In his view, the Kingdom of Christ could only have a spiritual dimension.<sup>28</sup> Zwingli also judged their doctrine to be seditious, in that it imagined the creation of a kingdom on Earth and promised Jews and Christians carnal happiness, which was not mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.<sup>29</sup>

In the light of these harsh attacks by Reformation thinkers, it is not hard to understand the nature of the polemic launched against Pucci by the Lutheran Lukas Osiander (and, before this, by the pseudo-Honoré de Paris) following the appearance of writings featuring very similar doctrines to those of Borrhaus and Curione.<sup>30</sup> All three reacted to these accusations by trying to sidestep them, either by specifically saying that the Kingdom of the Israelites would be spiritual, not terrestrial,<sup>31</sup> or pointing out that the period of one thousand

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<sup>27</sup> Bietenholz, "Millenarismo," 61. Bullinger criticized Curione's prophecy on the future conversion of the Jews and his idea of Christ's Second Coming. According to the *antistes* of the Zurich reformed Church, the propagation of God's Word had already taken place thanks to the apostolic preaching and, after that, with the Reformation: men were thus expected to wait for the Last Judgment; Felici, *Tra Riforma ed eresia*, 187.

<sup>28</sup> Felici, *Tra Riforma ed eresia*, 177–78, but above all Seifert, "Reformation und Chiliasmus." Already, in 1528, Butzer rejected the millenaristic doctrine of Borrhaus and Capito, underlining the scriptural groundlessness of their idea of Christ's Second Coming and the impossibility of justifying their belief in the establishment of a millenarian kingdom on earth. Butzer stated also the impossibility to justify their thesis—based on the *analogia fidei*—about the return of the Jews to Canaan, their conversion and participation in the future happiness of the New Eden.

<sup>29</sup> Zwingli, *Complanationis Isaiae prophetae [...] apologia*, 1529; L. Felici, *Tra Riforma ed eresia*, 179.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. iv and vi. The reference is obviously to Pucci's *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* (1592).

<sup>31</sup> Borrhaus replied to those accusations several years later in his *In Mosem [...] commentari* and in his *In Iesiae prophetae oracula [...] commentari* with the annexed *In Apocalypsim [...] explicatio*, published respectively in 1555 and 1561; Felici, *Tra Riforma ed eresia*, 190. For a similar answer given by Pucci, cf. *infra*, ch. iv.

years was not to be taken literally and that the Apocalypse was not as imminent as some might deduce from their writings.<sup>32</sup> It was a dialogue of the deaf.

### 3 Conciliarism and Latitudinarianism

Francesco Pucci did not restrict himself to repeating the millenarian perspective of his two illustrious predecessors; his reference to the second coming of Christ on Earth was connected to a very clear conciliarist vision. His thinking here came very close to that of Guillaume Postel and Giorgio Siculo, both of whom had harboured great hopes that the Council of Trent would bring the union and pacification of Christendom. It was in the context of this Council and the great hopes of change it inspired that Postel and Siculo had announced the truths that they claimed to safeguard.<sup>33</sup> In the same way, in the absence of the atmosphere of expectation that had characterized the early phases of the Council of Trent, Pucci directed his palingenetic creative inspiration at a Council of Christianity, or rather the future prospect of convening one.

What distinguished Pucci's call for a Council from his predecessors was his constant direct appeal to the Pope, or his belief that he could persuade the Holy Father of the goodness of his reasoning. To assess the likelihood of success of such an appeal, we need only recall the harshness with which

32 P. Bietenholz, "Millenarismo," 60. Curione explicitly argued against those who defended the imminence of the Last Judgment (D'Ascia, "Curione e gli ebrei," 350). For Pucci, cf. *infra*, ch. vi.

33 In addition to the classic study by W.J. Bouwsma, *Concordia Mundi: The Career and Thought of Guillaume Postel 1510–1581* (Cambridge Ma., Harvard University Press, 1957), 205–206, who underlined Postel's arguments in favour of a line of continuity between Christianity and Judaism in spite of his harsh accusations against Jews, see now Prosperi, "Giorgio Siculo: la doctrine du medius adventus et les attentes millénaristes en Italie au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Formes du millénarisme en Europe à l'aube des temps modernes. Actes du Colloque international de l'Association Renaissance, Humanisme, Réforme* (Marseille, 10–12 septembre 1998), édités par J.-R. Fanlo et A. Tournon, Paris, Champion, 2001, pp. 199–216; as well as C.-G. Dubois, "Guillaume Postel et la doctrine de l'avènement du Nouveau Monde," collected in the same volume at pp. 217–232. On Brocardo, another disarmed prophet who was in contact with Pucci, and on his millenarianism, characterized by a strong anti-Roman and Protestant bent and based on the idea that Luther started the restitution (*restitutio*) of the evangelical doctrine and of the religious unity, Venice being the elected place for Christ's new kingdom after the defeat of the papists, see M. Kuntz, *The Anointment of Dionisio. Prophecy and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (University Park, Pa., The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 122.

the Roman Inquisition would condemn another irenic Utopian, Marcantonio De Dominis, in 1624, for his “new heresy, namely the assertion and practice of the ancient dogma that man could be saved in any Christian sect that professed the fundamental articles of faith.”<sup>34</sup> The Inquisition had also used violence to stigmatize latitudinarian positions, such as that of Chio Giacomo Paleologo, a heretic who had been tried and sentenced to death in 1585,<sup>35</sup> those of the celebrated miller Menocchio, who revealed to his judges that “the majesty of God has given the Holy Spirit to all: to Christians and to heretics, to Turks and to Jews, and He holds all of them equally dear, and all shall be saved in some way”,<sup>36</sup> or those of a cobbler, Domenico Lorenzi, who appeared before the Inquisition court in 1573, accused of stating, Bible in hand, that “the Jews are saved even without baptism by doing good works” and that “[God] wants all to be saved so long as they do not sin out of malice or incapacity.”<sup>37</sup> There were also the statements made by Don Francesco Sbaraini, a Canon who was convicted by the Inquisitor of Mantua for maintaining that “no sinner went to hell, except those who despaired of God’s goodness” and that it was easy to infer from the Pauline formula “God wants all people to be saved” (“Deus vult omnes homines salvos fieri”; *I Tm 2:4*) that “even those who die in mortal sin shall be saved.” When examining these positions, it is not hard to discern an echo of the doctrines that Pucci was expounding all over Europe in the same period.<sup>38</sup>

34 D. Bernini, *Historia di tutte le heresie* (Rome, 1709), 4, 608. On this passage, see also E. De Mas, *L'attesa del secolo aureo* (1603–1625). *Saggio di storia delle idee del secolo XVII* (Florence, Olschki, 1982), 207. But see now the trial's final sentence published by E. Belligni, “Sentenza e condanna postuma di Marcantonio de Dominis,” *Il Pensiero politico* 33 (2000), 265–294, esp. the accusations recorded at pp. 276–277, such as the statement according to which people “who believe in the fundamental articles, even though they do not believe in all the other [articles], they are not separated from the Church but are connected with it through faith and charity and are living members of it” (“chi tiene e crede gli articoli fondamentali ancorché non tenga li altri sopradetti non è separato dalla Chiesa, ma è unito con essa in fede e charità et è suo membro vivo”). More generally, on De Dominis, see *eadem*, *Auctoritas e Potestas. Marcantonio de Dominis tra l'Inquisizione e Giacomo I* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 2003), and N. Malcom, *De Dominis (1560–1624). Venetian, Anglican, Ecumenist and Relapsed Heretic* (London, Strickland and Scott Academic Publications, 1984).

35 On his latitudinarian doctrines, see Szczucki, “Le dottrine ereticali.”

36 C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, translated by John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 60.

37 S. Seidel Menchi, *Erasmo in Italia, 1520–1580* (Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 1988), 151.

38 Quotations are taken from the sentence pronounced by the Inquisitorial Tribunal in Mantua on October 1st, 1580 (Dublin, Trinity College, ms. 1225; Seidel Menchi, *Erasmo in Italia, 158–159*).

Finally, we should also mention the inquisitorial condemnation of works like *Monarchia del nostro signor Iesu Cristo* ("Monarchy of Our Lord Jesus Christ") by Giovanni Antonio Pantera, the vicar of the Bishop of Parenzo, which lauded "the great sea of God's infinite mercy," and, inspired by a clear pro-France (and anti-Rome) stance, prophesied a happy millennium characterized by the end of wars, the spirit of domination and religious intolerance.<sup>39</sup> These few examples should suffice to make it clear that Pucci's appeal to the unity of Christians had no chance of finding favour among the ecclesiastical authorities to whom it was addressed. It was even less likely to be favourably received by Pope Sfondrati, one of the most emphatically anti-Jewish Popes of the sixteenth century.<sup>40</sup>

Gregory XIV probably appreciated the second document that Pucci sent him through his Cardinal Nephew even less.<sup>41</sup> This long letter directly addressed to him was both an out-and-out defence of Henry of Navarre's religious policies and his position as a man of religion, and a harsh attack on the short-sighted attitude of the Holy See towards the French question. Pope Sfondrati's

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39 Cfr. Prosperi, "Attese millenaristiche e scoperta del Nuovo Mondo," in *Il profetismo gioachinita tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento*, ed. G.L. Potestà (Genoa, Marietti, 1991), 433–460: 452. In 1554 the Venetian Index prohibited Giovanni Antonio Pantera's *opera omnia*, while his *Monarchia di Cristo* was specifically mentioned in the Sistine Index (1590) and in the 1593 edition as well; see *Index des livres interdits*, 10, 310. At the end of the century, the inquisitor of Genoa sent to the Congregation of the Index a "copy of some censored propositions" taken from Pantera's *Monarchia*, a book which was "admirably" used by the "heretics [...] to pervert simple people", in particular "where Saint John's Apocalypse was expounded"; letter from Genoa, September 3rd, 1599, in ACDF, Indice III/4, cc. 101r–v). Among the censored propositions those about the "vast sea of God's unlimited mercy" (quoted in the text) and those on the "salvific and meritorious value of Christ's sacrifice" stand out; cf. the "Censura sopra il libro intitolato *Monarchia del nostro Signore Giesù Christo di messer Giovanni Antonio Panthera parentino*," *ibid.*, Indice, Protocolli N., cc. 385r–v. On these documents and for an overview of the entire episode, see G. Caravale, "Profezia e censura nell'Italia di fine Cinquecento. La *Monarchia di Christo* di G.A. Pantera e l'Inquisizione," *Bruniana e Campanelliana* 18 (2012), 221–232.

40 A. Biondi, "Gli ebrei e l'Inquisizione negli Stati Estensi," in M. Luzzati, ed., *L'Inquisizione e gli ebrei in Italia* (Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1994), 267. More generally, for a preliminary overview of the sixteenth-century Church's attitude towards the Jews, see Prosperi, "La Chiesa e gli ebrei nell'Italia del '500," in *Ebraismo e antiebraismo: immagine e pregiudizio* (Florence, Giuntina, 1989), 171–183; idem, "L'Inquisizione romana e gli ebrei," in *L'Inquisizione e gli ebrei in Italia*, 67–120; and A. Foa, *Ebrei in Europa. Dalla peste nera all'emancipazione XIV–XIX secolo* (Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1992), 48–60 and 183–204.

41 On the three documents preserved in Archive of the former Holy Office (ACDF) see *supra*, footnote 5.

intransigence on this point was well known. While Sixtus V, despite initially excommunicating the King, had continued to be particularly prudent about French political problems, becoming increasingly distrustful of a Catholic League that he knew was being manipulated by Philip II,<sup>42</sup> his successor had adopted a much tougher approach from the start.

Openly pro-Spain, he immediately put pressure on the leaders of the League to renounce the King of Navarre and elect a Catholic prince; in May 1591, he also sent Nuncio Landriani to Paris with a monition that proclaimed the King's loss of his throne, together with a bull of excommunication against all those who remained faithful to the heretical prince.<sup>43</sup> On his part, Henry of Navarre, driven by the pressure of jurists and French parliamentary members whose Gallic pride was deeply hurt,<sup>44</sup> reacted in an equally decisive manner by issuing the Edict of Mantes on 24 July in the same year. This restored the main dispositions of the Edict of Poitiers (1577) to the advantage of his co-religionists.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, although Pucci's letter to the Pope came at a time of maximum diplomatic tension between Rome and the King of France, he did not hide the fact that he disagreed with the Pope's political and religious convictions.

This was not the first time that Pucci had taken a public stand in favour of Henry IV. Previously, in August 1590, while in Prague, following the death of Henry III and Navarre's succession to the throne of France, he had written to Orazio Pallavicino, a faithful servant of Queen Elizabeth of England,<sup>46</sup> declaring himself to be "most devoted to the cause of the King of France and Navarre".<sup>47</sup> Voicing the great expectations raised by Henry IV's succession, he immediately began to express the hope that Henry would summon the Council that he had been requesting for some time. He also made plans to travel to France in the near future: "Whether this Council, so much desired by all men

<sup>42</sup> L. von Pastor, *The History of the Popes: from the Close of the Middle Ages, drawn from the Secret Archives of the Vatican and other Original Sources* (St. Louis, Herder, 1923–69), 10, 250 ff.; A.E. Baldini, "Aristotelismo e platonismo nelle dispute romane sulla Ragion di stato di fine Cinquecento," in *Aristotelismo politico e Ragion di Stato*, ed. A.E. Baldini (Florence, Olschki, 1995), 201–226: 203.

<sup>43</sup> Von Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 245 ff.; F. Rocquain, *La France et Rome pendant les guerres de religion* (Paris, Librairie ancienne Edouard Champion, 1924), 438–39.

<sup>44</sup> J. Lecler, *Histoire de la tolérance au siècle de la Réforme* (Paris Editions Albin Michel, 1994; first edition 1955), 507. The two bulls of Gregory XIV provoked several protesting treaties, among which were Claude Fauchet's *Traité des libertez de l'Eglise gallicane*, Charles de Faye's *Discours* and Guy Coquelle's *Discours des droits ecclésiastiques* (*ibid.*).

<sup>45</sup> Rocquain, *La France et Rome*, 442. The edict of Poitiers resembled in its basic provisions the more famous edict of Nantes (Lecler, *Histoire de la tolérance*, 489 ss.).

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Prague, August 25th, 1590, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 301–306.

<sup>47</sup> Firpo, *Scritti*, 305.

of good spirit, is held in France or elsewhere, I hope to be present myself with something not unworthy of spiritual ears.”<sup>48</sup>

Gregory XIV’s clear refusal to deal with Henry IV now compelled Pucci to take the side of a sovereign who “God seem[ed] to have called upon for the repression of all iniquities and to defend the equity of our religion and the freedom of the Christian Republic.”<sup>49</sup> Pucci immediately announced his intention to discuss the bulls of excommunication and forfeiture issued against the future King of France,<sup>50</sup> arguing that this “thunderbolt of a remedy” would not only fail to restore the prestige of the kingdom but, as had happened before in other cases, would also increase French disdain of the Holy See.<sup>51</sup> These thunderbolts would therefore return to strike those who had rashly launched them.<sup>52</sup>

He then devoted more than two long pages to clearing Henry IV of the accusation of heresy by adopting his usual arguments. According to his idea of natural innocence, man was born innocent and remained so until the age of reason and judgement. At this point, he either maintained his original state of innocence or deviated from it, depending on the type of education (language, local customs and religion) received from his parents.<sup>53</sup> The young orphan Henry—who had been brought up “according to the mother’s tradition” (“matris more”) as his father had been Catholic<sup>54</sup>—deserved all the commiseration owed to someone deceived by others about divine predestination, a “most obscure and most difficult matter.”<sup>55</sup> A true heretic, on the other hand, was someone who stubbornly opposed the Holy Church of God with knowing reluctance.<sup>56</sup> Pucci continued his defence against those who accused Henry of persisting in his error even after reaching the so-called age of maturity, albeit

48 *Ibid.* On that occasion too his inspired millenarianism overcame his capacity to invoke at once the balance of power, leading him to invoke right away a “celestial council” announced by the “Supreme Father”: “I am not very hopeful indeed that an earthly council can be announced before the one to be announced by the Holy Father” (“In vero non ho grande speranza di Concilio che vaglia molto innanzi a quello ch’è per tenere il sommo Padre”).

49 ACDF, St. st. L6-n, c. 40v; Baldini’s edition, 194.

50 *Ibid.*, c. 40r; Baldini’s edition, 193.

51 *Ibid.*, c. 44v; Baldini’s edition, 204.

52 *Ibid.*, c. 44r; Baldini’s edition, 203.

53 With simple and incisive words, Pucci explained that “singuli mortales pueri, sine alio delectu aut malitia ulla, discunt ritus religionasque parentum, sicut linguas caeterosque mores patrios” (*ibid.*, c. 45v). On these issues see Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento*, 360 ff.; and Rotondò, “Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra,” *passim*.

54 ACDF, St. St., L6-n, c. 46v; Baldini’s edition, 210.

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Ibid.*

less incisively than before, by maintaining that in the context of the violent religious wars sweeping through France, it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for the young King of Navarre to distinguish heretical lies from the truth of the Catholic faith “in such discord and conflict among the learned” (in tanta doctorum dissensione ac pugna).<sup>57</sup>

The incontrovertible proof that Henry of Navarre was on the side of reason and that the Pope was making a serious mistake by condemning him was, however, the fact that he had always declared himself ready “to admit a better doctrine” (ad meliorem doctrinam admittendam), showing himself to be an enemy of obstinacy and iniquity. Above all, since his youth (“antequam ipse ex ephebis exiret”), Henry of Navarre had supported the suggestion to summon a Council as the best remedy for the schism dividing his kingdom.<sup>58</sup> Every time that Christian unity was internally divided by disputes and discussions, with both sides claiming that their definition of Christian doctrine and worship was right, the side striving to entrust the solution to a public council would not only be exercising its right, but would also be honouring God’s majesty in the best possible way.<sup>59</sup> Henry was therefore on the right side in any case.

The defence of the “Gallic Hercules” therefore coincided with the assertion of the validity of the reasons for summoning a council, the earthly incarnation of the “celestial Consistory” evoked by Pucci in view of the conversion of the Jews.<sup>60</sup> In order to support the call for a “terrestrial Council,” Pucci dealt a hard blow to papal authority by developing positions he had already expressed in previous writings. In the anonymous *Forma d’una repubblica catholica* (1581), he had proposed an idea of the origin of the Church’s authority that posed a strong threat to the hierarchical principles of the Roman Curia. He wrote: “After God, it is the people who create kings and magistrates and it is the people who likewise create the ministers and governors of the Church, and pronounce judgement on differences arising in the interpretation of divine laws,” and suggested a council as a solution to the “negligence” with which the Curia treated the faithful: “Let the remedy be to join together in this general agreement that we hereby propose.”<sup>61</sup> Then, in *De regno Christi*, an unpublished treatise written some years or perhaps months before the long letter to

57 *Ibid.*, c. 47r; Baldini’s edition, 211. According to Pucci, it was not fair to hold against Henry of Navarre his abjuration of Calvinism which he was forced to perform after the Saint Bartholomew’s Day massacre.

58 *Ibid.*, c. 47v; Baldini’s edition, 212.

59 *Ibid.*, c. 43v; Baldini’s edition, 202.

60 Cf. *supra*.

61 *Per la storia degli eretici*, 201–202.

Gregory XIV, he launched a bitter attack on the Roman cardinals who headed the ecclesiastical hierarchy along with the Pope, announcing that one of the first acts of the new order established by the Kingdom of Christ on Earth would be to abolish the Curia, the main source of the Catholic Church's misfortunes.<sup>62</sup> In the treatise-letter sent from Frankfurt, Pucci developed the arguments in his two previous works in a more organic way by reminding his distinguished counterparts of the principle of the direct divine inspiration of all the faithful,<sup>63</sup> the principle according to which God had promised and given the Holy Spirit to each believer.<sup>64</sup> This was the cornerstone of his proposal to return to the model of the primitive Church of the Apostles, in which decisions were taken unanimously.<sup>65</sup> The only papal sentences and "definitions" that deserved the apostolic title were those accepted with the full consent of the ecclesiastical community, sentences which good pious Catholics could not object to.<sup>66</sup> This call for a return to primitive religious universalism based on the primacy of the Holy Spirit inevitably affected the prerogatives of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The excommunication of an illustrious member of the Christian community—which is how Pucci considered Henry of Navarre—could not take place until the matter had been examined and approved by all those concerned.<sup>67</sup> If a minister of the Church—even the Pope—adopted a position that "smacked of flesh and blood" and "takes up position against God's will" (*divinae menti aduersetur*), he ceased to be a model to be followed and became a bad example to be avoided.

Pucci felt that the true *maiestas* ("majesty") descending from the Holy Spirit resided in the Christian people<sup>68</sup> and that the Pope was just a man like any

62 The Roman Curia was responsible for the fact that "ipsa Ecclesia apud multos non satis perspicaces male audit, et tantum non deseritur ab hominibus cordatis et piis," *ibid.*, 371.

63 Pucci appealed for the first time to this doctrinal principle during the dispute held in London in 1575 against the ministers of the French church; cf. *supra*, ch. II.

64 "Spiritum sanctum [...] [esse] a Domino nostro, singulis ipsi creditibus, promissum et datum" (ACDF, St. St. L6-n, c. 40v; Baldini's edition, 194). The circumstance that within Catholic schools, monopolized as they were by the Jesuit's espousal of scholastic philosophy, that kind of doctrine was taught to be rejected was a clear sign that those schools "tantum [...] tribuunt caecae imitationi pastorum, tantumque deterrent singulos a libera inquisitione veritatis, tantumque dubitant ne catholica pietas periclitetur, si prima illa impressio et institutio, quam fere cum lacte hausimus, libere examinetur" (*ibid.*).

65 *Ibid.*, c. 42v; Baldini's edition, 200. Similar positions had been expressed by Pucci himself more than ten years before; cf. Pucci, *Informatione*, 146.

66 *Ibid.*, c. 44r; Baldini's edition, 203.

67 *Ibid.*, c. 51v; Baldini's edition, 222.

68 *Ibid.*, c. 43v; Baldini's edition, 202.

other,<sup>69</sup> endowed with paternal authority over the faithful. However, as this authority was based on the principle of reciprocity like all father-son and master-disciple relationships, it ceased to have any value or validity as soon as he stopped feeding his children with “divine nourishment”. The history of the Church was full of examples of how he had been tricked “by false news and testimony” or by sectarian and corrupt ministers or even “by his own soul, not listening to divine messages.”<sup>70</sup>

The Pope therefore had no authority to oppose demands for a Council announced by the Word of God, or by other similarly inspired oracles and masters. Pucci’s argument rested on a dual order of historical conditions: the invalidity of the clause *Quibuscunque in contrario non obstantibus*, (“Notwithstanding any contrary pronouncement”) through which popes legitimized waiving their predecessors’ laws, canons and decrees,<sup>71</sup> and the confirmation of the validity of the decrees of the Councils of Constance and Basle, which the Roman Curia had never applied in practice.<sup>72</sup> Pucci concluded that the Pope “is less than the council, not unless the party is less than the whole” (est concilio minor, non secus ac pars minor est toto)<sup>73</sup> and said that if he wished to avoid transforming the Catholic Church into an “antichristian tyranny”, he could not bow to the will and “libido” of single apostolic authorities in the form of individual bishops.<sup>74</sup> The only option left to Gregory XIV was to redeem his error and annul the King of France’s excommunication,<sup>75</sup> thereby embracing the cause of the Council and gathering around him all the ministers and faithful Catholics that supported Henry of Navarre.<sup>76</sup> Pucci’s conciliarism and its accompanying universalistic dream therefore presupposed that the Pope would completely accept the summoning of a universal Council by the French monarch and, I would say, collaborate in full.<sup>77</sup>

In this way, Pucci succeeded in maintaining two apparently irreconcilable positions at the same time: his violent attack on Gregory XIV and his firm

69 “Papam [...] non esse plus audiendum, quam caeteros homines” (*ibid.*, c. 44r; Baldini’s edition, 203).

70 *Ibid.*

71 *Ibid.*, c. 46r; Baldini’s edition, 208.

72 *Ibid.*, c. 49r; Baldini’s edition, 215.

73 *Ibid.*, c. 44r; Baldini’s edition, 202.

74 *Ibid.*, c. 43v; Baldini’s edition, 202.

75 *Ibid.*, c. 50v; Baldini’s edition, 220.

76 *Ibid.*, c. 46r; Baldini’s edition, 208.

77 S. Ferretto, “‘Una chiesa rinnovata’ e ‘un popolo fatto tutto santo’: la visione del Cristianesimo tra riflessione teologica e millenarismo in Francesco Pucci,” *Archivio storico italiano* 145 (2007), 77–120: 119.

defence of papal authority. He harshly criticized the corruption in the Curia and laid bare the Pope's arrogance and errors, following Postel's example but, unlike Postel, he continued to recognize the important leadership role played by Rome.<sup>78</sup> He did this by distinguishing between the institution of the Papacy, whose sacred function in the history of Christianity and within the Church he strenuously defended, and the men who had embodied this function at different times. As the latter were subject to human error, they were also potential targets for ruthless criticism such as his.<sup>79</sup>

This subtle distinction did not meet with the approval of Rome; the reaction of the Pope and the entire Curia must have been one of total disdain, except perhaps for a small "Navarrist" faction led by Lomellini and Minucci, who were ready to entrust Henry of Navarre with the task of saving Christianity and constructing a new political order, as long as his conversion to Catholicism was genuine.<sup>80</sup> There is therefore no need to provide any lengthy explanations about why these long letters can still be found among the papers of the Roman

78 Postel's clear call for Venice to become a protagonist of the coming conciliar season was similar to Pucci's emphasis on the political role which he attributed to Henry IV's France, but it was above all the consequence of a conciliarist vision strongly permeated by Gallican ideals. Though not reaching the point of denying the pope's divine authority and though considering him as a necessary instrument and symbol of order and unity for the Church, Postel did not hide his deep distrust for papal politics (in some of his writings Rome was depicted as the "cause of all the tyrannies of the world" and even as the incarnation of the Antichrist); this lack of confidence, this hostility towards the papacy led him to deny Rome a significant role in his utopian political project; see Bouwsma, *Concordia mundi*, 177 and 179; but also Hamilton, *The Family of Love. On Venice as the ideal exponent of the Gallican model in Italy*, see A. Tallon, *Conscience nationale et sentiment religieux en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Essai sur la vision gallicane du monde* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2002).

79 As human beings, individual popes were fallible: for this reason "spiritual men" like him were needed to guide and correct them. On this issue see also Ferretto, "Una chiesa rinnovata," 116.

80 Baldini, "Aristotelismo e platonismo," 213. On the different viewpoints concerning the 'French issue' within the Roman Curia, see also idem, "Le guerre di religione francesi nella trattatistica italiana della Ragion di Stato: Botero e Frachetta," in *Dal Machiavellismo al Libertinismo. Studi in memoria di Anna Maria Battista, Il Pensiero politico* 22 (1989), 301–324; and R. De Maio, "La Curia Romana nella riconciliazione di Enrico IV," in idem, *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del Cinquecento* (Naples, Guida, 1992; first edition 1973), 143–187. But see now also M.T. Fattori, *Clemente VIII e il sacro collegio 1592–1605. Meccanismi istituzionali ed accentramento di governo* (Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 2004), and Saverio Ricci, *Il sommo inquisitore. Giulio Antonio Santori tra autobiografia e storia 1532–1602* (Rome, Salerno editrice, 2002).

Inquisition. Cardinal Nephew Paolo Camillo Sfondrati presented them first to the Congregation of the Index and then to the Holy Office; they played a substantial role in the decisions to add Pucci's name to the Index as one of the first class of authors (12 December 1592) and to start inquisitorial proceedings against him.<sup>81</sup>

#### 4 “Earthly Affairs” and “Heavenly Matters”

While it was easy to predict Rome's negative reaction, everything suggested that the reception in France would be more favourable. Pucci's conciliarist appeal was fuelled by the excitement that had characterized French pamphleteering in the early 1590s and he made desperate attempts to align himself with all those who, from different perspectives, invoked the Council as the solution to the political problems and religious conflicts in France.<sup>82</sup> Pucci's main aim was to obtain support and praise from Henry IV, the uncontested hero of these long letters, and he arrived in Paris hoping to meet him a few months or possibly weeks after sending them.<sup>83</sup> He may have succeeded in obtaining an audience between mid-March and early April 1592, beneath the walls of the city of Rouen, which was under siege from royal troops, or in Dieppe, where the King stopped with his troops.<sup>84</sup> Whether it actually happened or not, the meeting

81 The inquisitorial trial started after the denunciation made by the Florentine Inquisitor on October 3rd 1592 and occurred *in absentia* until Pucci's capture at the end of 1593; see Firpo, “Processo e morte,” 23, and docc. 1 e 2 at p. 38. Having been interrupted many times, even for long periods, the trial lasted four years until the final death sentence as *hereticus relapsus* was carried out on July 5th, 1597. The records of the trial have been lost. The only surviving inquisitorial documents have been published by Luigi Firpo. They concern the confiscation of Pucci's Florentine property and a dispute over Pucci's lineage (Firpo, “Processo e morte,” 38–51). On Pucci's writings that ended up in inquisitorial hands before the beginning of the trial, see Caravale, “Inediti di Francesco Pucci.” More generally on Pucci's trial see *infra*, Epilogue.

82 On French conciliarist discord, see, in general, *infra*, ch. v.

83 As Pucci had already intimated in his letter to Orazio Pallavicino, the main reason for his long journey from Prague to Paris was his strong determination to meet the French king and convince him of his prophetic proposal; Pucci himself, addressing the king of Navarre in August 1592, wrote about the “conscience and [...] the charity that made me travel for thirty days so that I could come and speak with you” (“conscienza e [...] [della] carità che mi ha mosso a venire da lontano trenta giornate a parlare a lei”); Firpo, *Scritti*, 318–319.

84 Cf. *ibid.*, 319, footnote 2. From Dieppe Pucci wrote a letter to Cardinal Charles of Bourbon and a second one to his brother-in-law Gerini on April 15th. The first letter, previously

did not produce the desired results. Pucci himself hinted at the unequivocal nature of the King's reaction: "The prince replied that he lacked the time and the opportunity, but certainly not the desire, to devote himself to heavenly matters in the midst of this clash of arms and earthly tumults."<sup>85</sup>

With great discretion and tact, Henry had set things out plainly. Pucci's proposals and hopes regarded "heaven" and he had neither the time nor the means to dedicate himself to them, as his daily schedule was filled with far more earthly concerns. In a letter to Louis Revol, Navarre's secretary, shortly thereafter, Pucci reluctantly had to recognize the unbridgeable gap between his outlook and that of the French governors:

I found the minds of men from your nation so occupied by earthly affairs that I was nearly silenced and prevented from speaking about celestial matters, although they might have extinguished much of the fire burning in that kingdom.<sup>86</sup>

In the end, Pucci's insistence on the common destiny of regeneration and unity shared by the King of France and the Pope turned out to be a colossal error of political judgement.<sup>87</sup> It is true that events in Rome and Paris eventually

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unpublished, appears now in the Appendix of this volume for the first time see *infra*, ch. iv and v; as the second document see Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 136–139.

85 Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 1.

86 Letter from The Hague [?], August 1592, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 125–126. As further evidence, Pucci himself made short work of those mundane worries and political obstacles defined as "absurdities and difficulties which delay the development of our religion and the feeling of that satisfaction and consolation which are the heights of its celestial feature" ("assurdità e difficoltà che ritardano molto il corso della nostra religione e il sentimento di quella soddisfazione e consolazione in cui consiste la somma della sua celestiale proprietà"); letter to Jean de Vivonne, Marquis of Pisany, The Hague, August 1592, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 126–127.

87 *Vis-a-vis* the pontifical authority, Pucci had always relied on Henry IV's support and encouragement, as if that "same hope" with which he, wrongly or rightly, credited the King of Navarre, could have made his message more incisive. Also on the occasion of Clement VIII's papal election Pucci insisted on this point: "[When I] was given the announcement that the most bright day had come for Italy and especially for our native land [Florence]: that is to say that a Florentine pope had been elected [...] I immediately conceived the hope that a man of such stature, chosen by the divine will and promoted to such a high status, beyond all partisan expectations, and provided with admirable clemency, would make an important contribution to calm down this tempest aroused by the inclemency of the others, which had nearly ruined the Christian world and submerged the vessel of St. Peter. After having heard my proposal, the king [of Navarre] immediately shared my

became closely intertwined, but only in an instrumental way; Navarre needed the validation of Rome in order to reconcile the Kingdom of France, while Rome wanted the Wars of Religion to end by safeguarding the Catholic tradition of the French monarchy. If Henry ever embraced the idea of a national council, urged on by the *politiques* and irenists on the two sides, he certainly never thought of a universal council of all believers (as Pucci envisaged), the messianic prospect of the “coming of his divine majesty to hold a court and consistory and to reform the Church,” or the equally utopian vision of the “conversion of circumcised and pagan nations.”<sup>88</sup> Henry IV’s worries were purely political; if he could pacify people’s minds, then civil peace could be guaranteed, allowing Catholics and Protestants to live together in the same country. There were no thoughts of the spiritual reconciliation of Christianity, which would use the tragic situation in France to achieve universal peace, either in Paris—perhaps there never had been—or Rome. It must be said that at this point it was only the dream of an incorrigible utopian, the vain hope of a disarmed prophet.<sup>89</sup>

As we shall see in the next chapter, Pucci’s experience in Paris not only marked the failure of his aspirations about the Council, but was also a dramatic final moment of truth for the original doctrinal proposal that he had been striving to export to major European cities for almost two decades: the “universal benefit of Christ for all believers”, the idea of universal salvation for all believers.<sup>90</sup>

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hope and considered it appropriate for me to tell Your Holiness what had been revealed to me by the Lord Our Father” (“[Quando mi] fu portato l’annunzio che era sorto il giorno più radioso per l’Italia e particolarmente per la patria nostra: [e cioè che] era stato creato un pontefice fiorentino [...]—scrisse Pucci con l’attenzione costantemente rivolta alle vicende francesi—concepì subito la speranza, infatti, che un uomo di tale importanza, scelto dalla divina volontà e promosso a una dignità tanto eccelsa al di là di ogni faziosa attesa e dotato di ammirabile clemenza, avrebbe dato un contributo non insignificante per placare questa tempesta che, eccitata dall’altrui inclemenza, per poco non ha mandato in rovina il mondo cristiano e quasi ha lasciato sommersere nei flutti la navicella di san Pietro. A una mia proposta, anche il re venne subito nella mia stessa speranza e giudicò opportuno che io comunicassi alla Santità Vostra le cose che mi aveva rivelato il Sommo Padre”); Pucci, *Epistola dedicatoria a Clemente VIII*, in idem, *Efficacia salvifica*.

88 Letter to Pope Clement VIII, Salzburg, August 25th, 1593, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 155.

89 Since Henry IV was intolerant of the theological “sophistries and absurdities” (sofisterie e assurdità) of the two great religious parties, he would hardly have accepted Pucci’s position, it too wholly theological and doctrinal, as spelled out in his *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* of which, shortly later, he sent a copy to the French sovereign; cf. Firpo, *Scritti*, 125.

90 The reference is to the work published in 1592 (the *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*) on which see *infra*, ch. vi.

# Among Catholics and Calvinists: Francesco Pucci in Late Sixteenth-Century France

## 1 A Calvinist in *ligueur* Paris?

Francesco Pucci entered the French capital in autumn 1591, when it was still occupied by the Catholic *ligueurs*. The city had been under siege since May 1588, when Henry de Guise disobeyed Henry III's orders and marched his troops into Paris; the King of France could not tolerate the presence of rebels in the capital of his kingdom, a state within the state whose awkward presence threatened the very existence of the French monarchy. The King's violent death at the hands of a friar, Jacques Clément, on 1 August 1589 in the park of Saint-Cloud just outside Paris had not upset the political balance, as Henry III had already named Henry de Bourbon as his successor, thereby authorizing the latter to succeed him formally on the French throne as Henry IV. On its part, the Catholic League wasted no time; instead of supporting the legitimacy of the new sovereign, it hastened to find a credible alternative, recognizing the old Cardinal of Bourbon as the only King of France under the name of Charles X. As France split into two notional political regions—one loyal to the new king and the other under the strong influence of the Catholic League—Henry IV never abandoned his plan to reconquer the capital and the monarchist troops laid siege to the city between April and August 1590. The result was a failure for the King, since Spanish military reinforcements in the pay of the Duke of Parma arrived on the scene, but the siege nevertheless left its mark. The people of Paris were greatly affected by the material restrictions that had been forced upon them and pinned their hopes on the comforting fervour of the *ligueur* preachers. Even after the end of the siege, they continued to incite the Parisians against Henry IV and did not hesitate to present the struggle with the invader as an apocalyptic battle against the Antichrist. By comparing any desire to surrender to a betrayal of divine will—therefore punishable by death—the *ligueur* preachers paved the way for an escalation of radicalism and violence, which coincided precisely with the weeks of Pucci's arrival in Paris. However, this radical phase was merely a brief parenthesis, for—as Pucci saw for himself—it soon gave way to a solemn liturgical and symbolic structure around which the *ligueurs* organized their solid hold on the capital,

guaranteeing that it remained occupied until Henry IV's tormented conversion to Catholicism.<sup>1</sup>

As we have seen, Pucci had left Prague a few months before and after a brief stay in Frankfurt, during which he composed his two letters to Gregory XIV and the latter's Cardinal Nephew, he arrived in Paris with the secret intention of meeting Henry IV. Who had helped pave the way for his arrival in Paris? The first name that springs to mind is that of Guillaume d'Ancel, Henry of Navarre's agent in Prague. The close bond between the two men<sup>2</sup> had not gone unnoticed in the Empire: Cesare Speciano wrote to Cinzio Aldobrandini, referring to Pucci's *De Christi efficacitate*, a work d'Ancel helped circulate: "I hear that this man, a resident in the city, claims to be an agent of Navarre; he goes around presenting the book to many as a good work written by a Catholic."<sup>3</sup> It was therefore d'Ancel who put him in contact with the King of France's entourage from Prague, awakening a hope that would never be fulfilled. Besides Henry IV's agent in Prague, it is possible that Filippo Segu played a role of some importance in Pucci's decision to go to Paris. Segu was an old acquaintance of his, in whose hands he had abjured a few years before; he was the former Nuncio in Prague and at the time the Nuncio in Paris. Pucci probably received

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1 For the events involving Pucci, see also *infra*. On the Catholic League and the occupation of Paris, see, above all, F.J. Baumgartner, *Radical Reactionaries: the political thought of the French Catholic League* (Geneva, Droz, 1976); E. Barnavi, *Le Parti de Dieu. Études sociale et politique de la Ligue parisienne* (Brussels-Louvain, B. Nauwelaert, 1980); idem-R. Descimon, *La Sainte Ligue, le juge et la potence. L'assassinat du président Brisson (15 novembre 1591)* (Paris, Hachette, 1985); M. Wolfe, *The Conversion of Henri IV* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1993), 98–108; M. Greengras, *France in the Age of Henri IV. The Struggle for Stability* (London-New York, Longman, 1995; first ed. 1984), 66 ff. On the symbolic and liturgical setup of the League's power see A.W. Ramsey, *Liturgy, Politics and Salvation. The Catholic League in Paris and the Nature of Catholic Reform, 1540–1630* (Rochester, University of Rochester Press), 1999. For an effective synthesis of the events see, also A. Jouanna, J. Boucher, D. Bologhi and G. Le Thiec, *Histoire et dictionnaire des guerres de religion* (Paris, Robert Laffont, 1998), 355 ff.

2 D'Ancel was the name suggested by Pucci when asked a few months later for an influential person who could supply further details concerning the doctrines that had been attacked by the Jesuits; see Pucci's letter to Antonio Corazzano in Prague, 1592, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 136–137; P. Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia nel Cinquecento. Nuovi documenti sul processo e la condanna di Francesco Pucci (1592–1597)* (Padua, Cedam, 1999), 61. Pucci had dedicated to M. D'Ancel a short, unpublished Latin treatise entitled *De ratione probandorum spiritum, an ex Deo sint, et de sententia Chiliastarum approbanda*, written during his stay in Prague between 1586 and 1589; for this lost writing, cf. Firpo, *Scritti*, 32.

3 Letter from Prague, December 1, 1592; P. Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 73 and 146 ff.

misleading assertions from these two men that he would be warmly welcomed in France.<sup>4</sup>

Once on French soil and awaiting an audience with Henry IV outside the besieged capital,<sup>5</sup> Pucci busily spread his doctrine in the hope of receiving support in Parisian religious circles. In keeping with his tendency for polemical confrontations, which had already seen him spread his doctrines publicly in many of the cities he had visited,<sup>6</sup> on 1 November 1591 he arranged the distribution of two *Theses* that were taken from his most important and as yet unpublished writings—*De praedestinatione* and *De regno Christi*. The former dealt with the universal and immediate effectiveness of redemption, while the latter addressed the imminent coming of Christ and the happy millennium. Reactions were not slow in coming. The first to answer his invitation, just three weeks after his appeal, was a certain Honoré de Paris, whose identity continues to be a mystery. The only information provided by scholars who have dealt with the subject peripherally concerns his religious confession: he was generally defined as a Parisian Calvinist, first by Delio Cantimori and later by Luigi Firpo,<sup>7</sup> in the wake of Pucci's first biographer in the eighteenth century, Giovan Battista De Gaspari.<sup>8</sup> However, it is legitimate to cast some

4 “Convinced by your letters I came to you not without risking my own life” (“Resso certo dalle vostre lettere sono venuto da voi non senza estremo pericolo per la mia vita”): Pucci's words can be read in his letter from Dieppe to Charles of Bourbon written in April 1592; cf. *infra*, Appendix.

5 Cf. *supra*, ch. III.

6 For example in Basel where, a few years before, at the beginning of 1578, Pucci had circulated a *Thesis*, printed in Frankfurt on January 1 of that year, containing an invitation addressed to all “lovers of truth” to come and take part in a debate over the issue of the unlimited amplitude of God's kingdom. For the *Thesis*, see Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 21–23; Firpo, *Scritti*, 299–300; and Biagioni, “Universalismo,” 331–332.

7 Delio Cantimori published Pucci's two theses, together with brief extracts from Honoré's *Orthodoxa explanatio* and Pucci's *Confutatio* replying to his opponent's accusations, in *Per la storia degli eretici italiani del secolo XVI in Europa*, testi raccolti da D. Cantimori e E. Feist, Rome, 1937, pp. 153–156. Luigi Firpo offered a detailed description of the documents from the disputation available in Venice and Salzburg (idem, *Scritti*, pp. 40–42) but his announcement of a complete critical edition of those documents did not materialize.

8 De Gaspari was the first to point out the existence of the documents connected with Pucci's disputation with Honoré and to identify Honoré as “Honoratus Calvinianus” or “Calvinianorum Doctor”, a definition which was later repeated by Cantimori and Firpo; G.B. De Gaspari, *Commentarius de vita, factis, operibus et opinionibus Francisci Pucci Filidini*, in *Nuova raccolta d'opuscoli scientifici e filologici*, vol. 30 (Venice, 1776), 1–50; for the specific quotations, see *ibid.*, respectively, 16, 18–19; more largely on the dispute see *ibid.*, 18–22. The specific bibliographical and archival information—confirming the identification of Honoré

doubts on this definition. Even if we ignore the delicate matter of the failure to identify a Calvinist minister or member of the French Huguenot movement with that name, we cannot ignore the historical context in which the dispute took place. November 1591 marked the height of the agitation caused by the *ligeurs*' occupation of Paris, when the Council of Sixteen took advantage of the absence of the Duke of Mayenne to instigate a kind of blacklist, including the names of all the *politiques* still resident in the capital and, more generally, all the opponents of the League. Among those sent to their deaths was the President of the Paris Parliament, Barnabé Brisson. The climate of terror lasted all month, until the Duke of Mayenne returned to Paris and ordered the arrest of the *ligeurs* responsible for these acts of intimidation.<sup>9</sup> Would it have been possible in such a climate for a Calvinist to dispute his theses in public or disseminate them in private? Was it possible for a Protestant to expound (or explain) Reformed orthodoxy (*Orthodoxa explanatio* was the title chosen by Honoré to introduce his response to Pucci dated 21 November) in a city held hostage by the most radical *ligeurs* without running the risk of being identified and sentenced to death? Finally, why did the author of this text feel the need to focus on the deviations of Pucci's doctrine from Roman orthodoxy in his polemical discourse, instead of limiting himself to defending his own doctrine, as might be expected of a Calvinist? These and other questions raise some doubt about Honoré's true identity and the plausibility of labelling him a Calvinist, a previously undisputed attribution. The doubt becomes even more substantial when one considers the only possible identification of the person behind this name. The Honoré de Paris mentioned in chronicles of the day was not exactly a Calvinist; named Charles Bochart de Champigny, he was a Capuchin friar of noble descent, the son of Jean (a parliamentary councillor) and Isabeau Allegrain.<sup>10</sup> After completing his studies at the College of Navarre and the Jesuit College of Clermont, at the age of 21, in 1587, against his parents' wishes, he presented himself to Bernard d'Osimo, the provincial father of the

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as a Calvinist theologian—appeared at p. 19, footnote 1, in De Gaspari's *Commentarius* ("Honorati Parisiensis Calvinianorum Doctoris *Orthodoxa explicatio ad priorem, et posteriorem Thesim Franc. Pucci ex Arch. Salisb.*")—do not find validation in the detailed description of the disputation documents preserved in the archbishop's archive in Salzburg's made by Luigi Firpo: in his transcription of the document one finds only the expression "Honorati Parisiensis", without the addition of the adjective 'Calvinist' (*Scritti*, 41).

<sup>9</sup> See the bibliography quoted *supra*, at footnote 1.

<sup>10</sup> On the family of Charles Bochart de Champigny and more specifically on his brother Jean, see F. Bayard, "Jean Bochart de Champigny (1561–1630)," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 46 (1999), 39–52.

Capuchin Friars Minor at the convent of Saint Honoré in Paris and asked to enter the Order. His wish was granted on 15 September, when he received the habit of St Francis and adopted the name of Friar Honoré de Paris. This marked the start of a long career, which from 1598 onwards included periods as the Provincial of Paris, the Commissioner General in Lorraine, the Custodian in Rome and the Commissioner General of missions in the East Indies. When he died in Chaumont on 26 September 1624, he had a steadfast reputation for sanctity, but there have been no developments since his beatification in March 1870 by Pius IX.<sup>11</sup> Honoré bequeathed a single printed work, an ascetic piece of writing entitled *Académie évangélique pour l'instruction spirituelle de la jeunesse religieuse et vrayement chrestienne*, published in Paris in 1622.<sup>12</sup> This work recommended the practice of continuous mental prayer as an instrument for achieving the union of the soul with God and was deeply influenced by his former fellow novice Benoît de Canfield, author of the well-known *Règle de Perfection* and the teachings of the grandmasters of German and Flemish mysticism, Johannes Tauler and Henry Suso.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> On this person, see H. de Calais, *Histoire de la vie, mort et miracles du R.P. Honoré Bochart de Champigny, capucin* (Paris, 1864; first ed. 1649); F. Mazelin, *Histoire du vénérable serviteur de Dieu le P. Honoré de Paris* (Paris, 1882); *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises. Le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. G. Grente (Paris, 1954), 503–504; Silvinus a Nadro, *Acta et decreta causarum beatificationis et canonizationis O.F.M.Cap.*, (Rome, 1964), 742–757; Raoul de Sceaux, *Histoire des Frères Mineurs Capucins de la province de Paris (1601–1660)* (Paris, 1965), *passim*; *Bibliographie de la littérature française du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1969, 2, 1048; and, above all, Jean Mauzaize, “Padre Onorato da Parigi, modello e maestro di vita spirituale,” in *Santi e santità nell’Ordine cappuccino. 1: Il Cinque e il Seicento*, ed. M. D’Alatri (Rome, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1980), 175–187; idem, *Le rôle et l’action des capucins de la Province de Paris dans la France religieuse du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris-Lille, 1978), v. 3, 728–731; see also M. Prevost’s entry in *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française*, sous la direction de M. Prevost et J.-C. Roman d’Amat, v. 16 (Paris, 1954), 744; as well as W.C. Van Dijk’s, in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, v. 7 (Paris, 1968–69), 119–121; and Isidoro da Villapadierna’s in *Dictionnaire d’Histoire et Géographie Ecclesiastiques*, v. 24, 1042–1044.

<sup>12</sup> *Académie évangélique pour l'instruction spirituelle de la jeunesse religieuse et vrayement chrestienne, es exercices pour réparer es ames la beauté de l'image divine defigurée par le péché. Instituée par Jésus-Christ en la montaigne du Calvaire et restituée par le glorieux Père S. François au mont d'Alverne. Divisée en trois traictez, avec une très nécessaire préparation à la pratique d'Iceux* (Paris, 1622).

<sup>13</sup> Large passages of the work, republished at the end of the 19th century (*Académie évangélique ou Ecole théorique et pratique de la perfection évangélique, par le P. Honoré de Paris*, Nouvelle édition, par le R.P. Flavien de Blois, Le Mans, 1894) are now in *I Frati cappuccini*, ed. C. Cargnoni (Rome, Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, 1988–1992), v. 4, 236–302.

Is it possible then that this French Capuchin was in Paris in autumn 1591 and took up the challenge thrown down by the recently arrived Francesco Pucci? Although most of the available records refer to Honoré as the Provincial of Paris and other positions he held in the Order, and although his biographies contain no trace of any quarrel with Pucci, the meagre information we have about his novitiate years is sufficient to enable us to sketch out a biographical and intellectual profile of a man that is compatible with his presence in Paris in November 1591, and, more generally, with the characteristics of the relevant dispute. When Henry de Guise was assassinated by order of Henry III at the end of 1588, the idyllic nature of the relationship between the Capuchin Order and the French monarch was fractured beyond repair.<sup>14</sup> The violence of the assassination induced Bernard d'Osimo, the Provincial of the Order, to break off all relations with Henry III, renounce his position (between 1590 and 1595 Paris had no Provincial and was governed from a distance by Father Basile of Chartres, in his capacity as Commissioner General) and send his best novices away from Paris, offering them the chance to continue their studies in Lorraine or Italy. In this way, the young Honoré de Paris left the French capital for Italy in early 1589, accompanied by two fellow brothers destined to become more famous than he did: Ange de Joyeuse and Benoît de Canfield. The three of them reached Italy via Switzerland, passing through Milan and then Florence, where they were very warmly received by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand I de' Medici.<sup>15</sup> It is possible that Father Honoré de Paris first heard mention of Francesco Pucci during this long stay at the Medici Court. The first news about Pucci had reached the Court at least two years before, in June 1586, when, writing from Prague, Cavalier Orazio Urbani, the Tuscan Ambassador at the Court of the Emperor, warned Grand Duke Francis about the presence of "Francesco Pucci, a Florentine, who has long been wandering around Italy and the rest of the world because of his doubts and chimeras concerning the true faith," but who now, thanks to the intervention of "two Englishmen", showed that he "had fully understood the error of his ways and now lived a deeply religious life."<sup>16</sup> The two Englishmen in question were none other than the renowned mathematician John Dee and the eccentric alchemist Edward Kelley, who

<sup>14</sup> For a general overview of the Capuchin presence in France, see O. van Asseldonk, "La vita spirituale e sociale dei cappuccini in Francia," in *I Frati cappuccini*, 4, 167 ff.

<sup>15</sup> For this information, see the best documented among all the 19th century biographies of Honoré: Mazelin, *Histoire du vénérable serviteur de Dieu*, esp. pp. 66–67, where one reads about Ferdinand I's strong relationship with the three Capuchins which included his showing them the relics of Saint Francis.

<sup>16</sup> Letter dated June 10, 1586, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 179.

“claimed they were prophets sent by God and who often conversed with the angels,” and played an important role in Pucci’s conversion, or rather return, to Catholicism.<sup>17</sup> However, Urbani deliberately refrained from mentioning these two controversial English prophets in a letter to the Grand Duke in October of the same year. As Urbani wrote, Pucci had taken great pains to show himself in a good light: “He says he has been away from his country for a long time because of the doubts he entertained concerning the Holy Scriptures,” but that “for the last year he has shown that he has fully ascertained the truth.” Duke Francis I’s emissary formed a totally positive opinion: “It is now apparent that we can judge him not only to be a good Catholic, but also one who is more than usually excited by the love of God”; “here,” he continued in laudatory terms, “he has made himself known as a man of good conscience and good intentions, with no interest in earthly matters.”<sup>18</sup> The “incredible deference and reverence” shown to “his Excellency the Ambassador” clearly hit the mark.<sup>19</sup> On his part, Pucci made his intentions clear: he longed to return to live in his city, Florence,

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17 See *supra*, ch. II.

18 The letter written from Prague on October 28, 1586 is published in Pucci, *Lettere*, II, p. 190. At the end of the document, Urbani underlined the personal profit that the Duke could gain from Pucci’s return to Florence: “He is a cultivated man, he has read many books, he has a very good memory, he is a good rhetorician, he is personable and has many other qualities: once he is here he can be usefully employed in some service” (“Per aver letto molto, veduto assai, aver gran memoria, facondia, presenza e altri sì fatti requisiti, potrebbe anco esser soggetto da venir talvolta impiegato utilmente in qualche servizio”); *ibid.*

19 These words are quoted from a letter from Prague, on October 28, 1586, written by the secretary of the Medician ambassador, Curzio Picchena, to the Granducal secretary Belisario Vinta (Pucci, *Lettere*, II, p. 189). It is worth noting here the passage where he recalled events at the French Court “eleven or twelve years ago” (“xi o xii anni sono”), where he was acquainted with Francesco Pucci, knowing him as a restless spirit in matters of religion but no doubt obsequious toward political authority: “Though I have not been dealing with him domestically, nevertheless I had the chance to meet him often together with all other Florentines living in Paris, and I can sincerely assert that I have never thought of him as a man ill-intentioned toward the most serene patron [the Duke of Florence], but instead as someone who had lost his way in matters of religion, as Pucci himself admits; actually, I noticed that he always honored and revered the ministers of Your Highness” (“Se bene io non praticai seco domesticamente, nondimeno avevo a tutte l’ore occasione di vederlo in compagnia degli altri Fiorentini che si riparavano lì, e posso sinceramente affermare ch’io non l’ebbi mai in concetto d’uomo di mala mente verso il serenissimo patrono, ma sì bene per uno che fusse fuor della vera strada della fede, come egli stesso confessa; anzi veddi sempre ch’egli onorava e reveriva i ministri di Sua Altezza”); *ibid.*

and expressed the desire to go to Rome in order “to fall back into the bosom of the Holy Church”. He therefore addressed his plea to be welcomed back to his homeland to Grand Duke Francis by way of his ambassador. The Grand Duke’s answer was polite but firm: “Before you return to Florence, you must first be purged and re-admitted to the bosom of the Holy Church, after which other matters may be considered.”<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, papal diplomacy moved into action. Having ascertained that the heretic had already repented ‘in foro interiore’,<sup>21</sup> Monsignor Filippo Sega, Bishop of Piacenza and Apostolic Nuncio at the Emperor’s Court, was working to obtain authorization from Rome for Pucci’s reconciliation *in utroque foro*, that is also *in foro iudicali*: “Although he is not aware,” he wrote to Rome, “that he has ever been tried in any court, in order to be more certain that he may return to his home country safely, for greater prudence he asked me for clarity about this reconciliation in both courts.”<sup>22</sup> Cardinal Decio Azzolini finally signed the papal authorization on 27 December and Pucci duly solemnly abjured before the Nuncio on 6 March 1587.<sup>23</sup> Just four days later, Urbani the Medici Ambassador returned to the Grand Duke to obtain the condition that the latter had placed on papal absolution. After making sure that there were no other charges against Pucci, Francesco I granted him the grace he had requested; Florence was ready to welcome back its prodigal son.<sup>24</sup> Urbani received the news as a personal success. A few weeks later in a letter to the Grand Duke, he was pleased to refer to Pucci as one of them; with reference to a volume that interested the Grand Duke, he assured him that “taking advantage of Pucci (who remains much obliged to your Lordship), I shall send you one of the said books.”<sup>25</sup> Pucci was therefore believed to be about to leave for Florence in May 1587, ready to re-embrace the country he had left nearly twenty years before. It is significant that at the same time Urbani was

<sup>20</sup> Draft of the answer written by Francis I to his ambassador Urbani, Florence, November 14, 1586, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 190–191.

<sup>21</sup> “Thanks to the provincial father of Saint Dominic [...], after being enlightened about the vanities of all the sects and after mending his past mistakes, Pucci repented with many tears and was reconciled *in foro interiore* and brought back to the Catholic Church” (“Per mezzo del Provinciale qui di S. Domenico [...], chiaritosi della vanità di tutte le sette e ravvedutosi degli errori suoi passati, con molte lagrime [...] venne a penitenza e nel foro interiore fu riconciliato da lui al gremio della santa Chiesa cattolica”); letter of Filippo Sega to Cardinal Decio Azzolini, Prague, December 9, 1586, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 192; see also the letter from Prague of the same day from Urbani to Francis I; *ibid.*, 191.

<sup>22</sup> Letter of Filippo Sega; *ibid.*, 192.

<sup>23</sup> The text of the abjuration is published in *ibid.*, 193–199.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 200–201.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from Prague, May 5, 1587; *ibid.*, 202.

negotiating the return to Florence of an old acquaintance of Pucci's, Giovanni Michele Bruto, a distinguished man of letters. Bruto had already been converted to Catholicism by Bolognetti in Krakow and pressed Francesco through Urbani and his secretary Picchena to have his *Historiae florentinae* examined and purged in view of the publication of a new amended version without all the anti-Medici elements that had aroused the indignation of the Grand Duke's Court (leading to a ban).<sup>26</sup>

However, something soon went amiss in this idyllic set-up so patiently planned by Ambassador Urbani. When Father Honoré de Paris arrived in Florence together with his two fellow brothers, the atmosphere had already changed significantly. If he heard anything about Pucci, as we like to imagine, it must have been quite different from the serene and reassuring news of a few months before. The death of Francesco I in October 1587 meant that the Grand Duchy passed to his brother Ferdinand, a cardinal of the Holy Roman Church. The first dispatch of his new ambassador in Prague seemed to destroy his predecessor's painstaking diplomatic work in one go. The same Francesco Pucci that had been hailed as a faithful servant of the Medicis a few months previously was now presented to the new Grand Duke as a perfect stranger that no one in Florence knew anything about. Francesco Lenzoni began his account as follows: "There is a certain Francesco Pucci here, in Florence they call him son of Dino Pucci [...]. This Francesco lived for twenty years or more first in France, then in Flanders, Holland, Zeeland and for many years in England," before recounting his arrival in Prague and the episode of his conversion in the hands of the Apostolic Nuncio. The Ambassador's last words sounded like a poorly concealed condemnation: "Although he makes great professions of being a Catholic, his continuous dealings with heretics and never-ending disputes make me doubt his sincerity."<sup>27</sup> It was not long before these suspicions voiced by Lenzoni became explicit denunciations by the ecclesiastical authorities. The Apostolic Nuncio Filippo Segu had been replaced (after Puteo's nunciature) by the far more diffident Alfonso Visconti, the Bishop of Cervia. A few months after his arrival in Prague, Visconti appeared to have few doubts about Pucci: "I am of the opinion that this fellow, speaking as a Catholic to Italians

<sup>26</sup> The publication did not take place because of the doubts of the new Medicean ambassador Lenzoni, who feared the indirect publicity which the printing of a new corrected edition would guarantee for the old, deplored version from the 1560s; M. Battistini, "Jean Michel Bruto, humaniste, historiographe, pédagogue au XVI siècle," *De Gulden Passer* 32 (1954), 25–95: 72–74.

<sup>27</sup> Letter of Francesco Lenzoni to the Granducal secretary Belisario Vinta, Prague, November 1, 1588, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 205–206.

who are here in this Court or happen to be passing through, does great harm and corrupts many. Also, it cannot be excluded that he has secret contact with heretics outside this Kingdom and that he acts as a spy for them.”<sup>28</sup>

Visconti only needed to see certain writings that Pucci gave him after the promise of safe conduct to Rome to realize how dangerous he was. On his part, Pucci immediately noticed the sudden change in attitude towards him;<sup>29</sup> in a matter of months, the image of Pucci sent out from the imperial city to the chambers of the Roman and Medici courts had altered significantly. He had been transformed from a penitent and devout Catholic into an incorrigible heretic or, in the best of cases, an able dissimulator.<sup>30</sup> The accounts that Honoré probably heard during his stay in Italy drew on this new image.

28 Letter of Visconti to Cardinal Montalto, Prague, October 2, 1589, in J. Schweizer, ed., *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland 1589–1592*, 2 Abt., 3 Band (Paderborn, 1919), 65. On the addressee of the letter, Alessandro Peretti, grand nephew of the pope, appointed Cardinal of Montalto on May 13, 1585 immediately after Sixtus V's pontifical election, quickly become one of the most influential members of the papal court, see K. Eubel – W. van Gulik, *Hierarchia catholica medii et recentioris aevi*, v. 3 (Monasterii, sumptibus et typis Librariae Regensbergianae, 1923), 56. The suspicion that Pucci was “a spy of the emperor to the Queen of England” (“spia dell'Imperatore alla regina di Inghilterra”) was suspected in May 1591 also by the Tuscan ambassador Giovan Battista Concini, influenced, as he himself admitted, by the allusions of the papal nuncio Visconti. See the letter from Prague to the Grand Duke Ferdinand I, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 210–211.

29 “Monsignor Malaspina, Monsignor Sega and Monsignor Puteo, who were nuncios when I was in Prague, had much more authority, doctrine, practice and dignity, and were older than Monsignor Visconti who recently was angry with me and started treating me harshly, nevertheless was not able to pronounce anything against me juridically, and I believe that then he had a change of heart and corrected his ways which did not do him justice and was an affront to my honor when he slandered me as unfrocked and a false believer, as he had begun, with abuses not worthy of a gentleman and a prelate” (“Monsignore Malaspina, monsignore Sega e monsignore Puteo, che furono nunzii a mio tempo ed erano persone di molto maggiore autorità, dottrina, pratica e dignità, e d'età più matura, che monsignore Visconti, che ultimamente, per collera, prese a trattarmi aspramente, né però potette pronunziare contra me cosa alcuna giuridicamente, e credo che si sia poi ravvisto ed emendato di quel suo modo di procedere troppo torto a se stesso e onore a me, se e' continuasse a diffamarmi quale sfrattato e mal credente, come egli aveva cominciato, con supercherie indegne di gentiluomo e di prelato”); letter to Clement VIII, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 117–118; Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 48.

30 In June 1591, replying to a request from his new ambassador in Prague Giovan Battista Concini, Ferdinand I definitely dissociated himself from his fellow citizen Francesco Pucci, rejecting the willingness to reach an accommodation with Pucci which had been shown to him by his brother a few years before and brushing off his spiritual expectations as the ravings of a “poor madman” (“Not only did he ask to be received in our State, but

We know practically nothing about Honoré's stay in Florence or his relations with the Grand Duchy following his departure. The three French Capuchins set off from the city and headed for Rome, where they probably stayed for a few months. After this, presumably at the end of 1589, they went to Venice, where they began to attend Father Lorenzo of Brindisi's theology courses. Even after the latter was appointed as the Provincial of Tuscany during the General Chapter of the Order in Cortona in 1590, the three men continued their studies and stayed in Venice until early autumn 1591.<sup>31</sup> After obtaining apostolic missionary diplomas from Rome, the Capuchins set off on their return journey back to Lorraine.<sup>32</sup> The best known of the three men, Ange de Joyeuse, decided to remain in Savoy to satisfy the Duke's request for his collaboration;<sup>33</sup> we do not know whether his two travelling companions chose to follow him or continue their journey towards their final destination. It seems plausible at this point of the journey that Honoré de Paris decided to go to Paris before settling in Lorraine, where he took his final examinations in 1592 at the convent of Saint Michel and was finally ordained a priest. Therefore, when Pucci arrived in Paris and decided to disseminate his two theses (dated 1 November), it is perfectly legitimate to suppose that Honoré was there too.

Are these elements sufficient for us to establish that Pucci crossed pens with a Capuchin friar rather than a Calvinist man of letters, as his biographers have so far maintained? After having identified a Capuchin friar called Honoré de Paris, who may have taken note of the suspicions of the Medicis and Romans about Pucci during his stay in Italy and who was plausibly in Paris at the same time, can we claim that authoritative scholars like Cantimori and Firpo made an error of judgement? Are these few elements enough to affirm that Pucci wildly misinterpreted his opponent's religious confession?<sup>34</sup> By no means.

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also to be assisted in his relationship with the pope; and we did not want to hear anything about it: the nuncio knows that"; "Chiedeva che non solo l'accettassimo noi ne' nostri Stati, ma che l'aiutassimo con il papa; e non ne volemmo sentir nulla, e il nunzio lo sa"); letter from Florence, June 15, 1591, in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 211–212.

<sup>31</sup> The information is deduced from L. de Gonzague, *Le Père Ange de Joyeuse, frère mineur capucin maréchal de France (1563–1608)* (Paris, 1928), 182, where he writes that Ange de la Joyeuse left Venice before October 1591.

<sup>32</sup> Mazelin, *Histoire du vénérable serviteur de Dieu*, 77.

<sup>33</sup> L. de Gonzague, *Le Père Ange*, 182.

<sup>34</sup> In at least two passages of his reply it is clear that Pucci was convinced of debating with a Protestant interlocutor; see, for example, where he wrote about those scholastic theologians who dispute "against Lutherans and yours" ("adversus lutheranos et vestros"); *Confutatio explanationis D.N. Honorati Parisiensis ad priorem thesim F. Puccii, per eundem F. Puccium Dei et Christi servum*—henceforth quoted as Pucci, *Confutatio*, c. 98), or that

In such cases, the final word lies with documentation and after reading and carefully studying the text of *Orthodoxa explanatio*, there is no doubt that the positions expressed by Honoré are those of a Calvinist. This is clear from his opening words on the reticence and reserve of one who wishes to play no part in a polemic that does not concern him, but who suffers to see the spectacle of hatred fuelled by the civil war and feels “pain” for every religious division. He viewed Pucci’s theses as an attack on Roman orthodoxy, on “Roman Catholics” (“catholicos romanenses”), from whom he was divided by “many things in religious matters, not without any pain” (“multa non sine dolore nostro in religione”) and wondered why they had been distributed in Paris rather than Rome. The French Calvinists (possibly who he was referring to with the generic “nos”) were supposed to stay out of these controversies (“quae extra nos nihil ad nos”) and he did not think it right that any of them should fan the hatred of religious controversy that had already caused so much damage to the French kingdom. However, after careful thought, he decided to reply in order to treat Pucci favourably and above all to refute the allegations that they were overly ingenuous in dealing with religion and confessional controversies.<sup>35</sup> His sentences were not easy to decipher; they were probably used as a mask by one of the many irenic spirits in France at the time. He was therefore a Calvinist, possibly a *politique* who believed in, or rather hoped for, reconciliation between the different religious confessions, an irenist who could not stand religious conflicts and disagreements. He was a Calvinist driven by irenic ideals who chose to take part in the dispute despite running serious risks. However, precisely because he was aware of the danger of exposing himself in a city occupied by the most intolerant *ligueurs*, he chose—at least we think he did—to hide behind the irreproachable name of a Catholic who he may have known, the name of a French friar who he might have had the good fortune to share his opinion of Francesco Pucci with. It was also the name of someone who

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passage where he referred to Zwingli as “one of yours” (“ac vestres ipse Zwinglius”; *ibid.*, c. 101). The document of the disputation from which we are quoting is an eighteenth-century copy preserved in BMV (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana), cod. Ital. x. 166, cc. 95–116; see also *infra*, footnote 37.

35 “Cum scripta sit haec thesis contra catholicos romanenses, et ab iis multa [nos] non sine dolore nostro in religione separant, cur nobis potius quam illis mitteretur dubitantes, ad eam respondere [respondendum] negligebamus. Nam quae extra nos nihil ad nos. [...] Et de religione cuius odio periclitatus Rex de regno et vita sine Regis mandato disputare cum homine praesertim peregrino capitale iudicabamus. Ut tamen tibi morem geramus amice et ne quod coepit perget iactare in vulgus nos non esse respondendo eadem ingenuitate qua in cunctis rebus solemus, quid in his thesibus probemus aut desideremus explanabimus”; Honoré, *Primae theseos orthodoxa explanatio*, in BMV, cod. Ital. x. 166, c. 95.

had recently left Paris (for Lorraine) and who would not be able to contest this attribution: the name of the Capuchin Honoré de Paris.<sup>36</sup>

We will now leave the insidious ground of hypotheses and return to the safer terrain of textual facts. On 21 November, Honoré de Paris—as we shall continue to call him—produced his reply to Pucci’s theses with a double *Orthodoxa explanatio*, thus offering the latter the opportunity to reply a few weeks later with a wider-ranging *Confutatio explanationis domini N. Honorati parisiensis*.<sup>37</sup> We cannot tell if Pucci knew the true identity of his adversary, but the use of *N.* before the name Honoré de Paris suggests that he was aware that he was dealing with a pseudonym. Not even once during the drafting of these *confutationes* did he wonder about his opponent’s confessional affinity, as he knew he was dealing with a Calvinist.

So what was the long-distance dispute between the two men about? In the first of the two theses, Pucci explicitly stated that “all men who die without being baptized before obtaining the use of reason are excited and restored to life thanks to Christ, the Brother and Saviour of all men, [...] [and thanks to Him], they will be saved and be happy for all eternity.” In his view, there was no way that the “mere lack of baptism or circumcision” could deprive man of the “happy blessing of Christ or eternal life”. As he reiterated a year later, he did not profess the vanity of holy rites but wanted to underline that divine benevolence did not depend on the sacraments; eternal damnation was only the destiny for someone who had deliberately been contemptuous of them, not someone deprived of them for reasons beyond his will.<sup>38</sup>

36 In any case, many questions regarding the real identity of this French ‘Calvinist’ still remain unresolved.

37 The two original writings by Honoré (each of them including one of the theses and the corresponding *Explanatio*) were preserved by Pucci among his personal documents in an autograph codex where he copied Honoré’s *Explanatio* (which in the original form is difficult to decipher) and his own twofold *Confutatio*, without copying the two *Theses* (which in any case survived among Honoré’s writings); cf. Firpo, *Scritti*, 40.

38 “Sacred rituals are [not] useless” (“I riti sacri [non] sono inutili”), he would specify just one year later in his *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, “but one always has to remember that the divine benevolence which embraces single individuals is not linked to any sacrament or ritual, and that men are ruined not because of their simple lack, but only because of [their] disregard” (“ma si deve sempre ricordare che la benevolenza divina che abbraccia i singoli individui non è legata ai sacramenti o ai riti, e che non la loro semplice mancanza, ma solamente il [loro] dispregio è causa di rovina”); Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, p. 65. Only those who “consciously and voluntarily do not trust those very deserving testimonies of faith announcing the Saviour himself (“scientemente e volontariamente non hanno fiducia in quelle testimonianze degnissime di fede che annunciano lo stesso Salvatore”), only

Faced with these propositions, the French Calvinist began in a subtly provocative way. He wrote that his adversary's affirmation could only be shared if "mankind" were replaced by the expression "the holy descendants of the faithful", thereby restricting the benefits of divine benevolence and eternal salvation exclusively to the predestined: "Rather than 'all men' we desire the text to state 'the holy descendants of the faithful'; or to put it more plainly, those who are born holy because of the faith of their ancestors." Exploiting the bugbear of the Pelagian heresy, the pseudo-Honoré presented a faithful version of the Calvinist concept of baptism. Calvin had stressed the declarative function of baptism, but had insisted above all on baptism as a sign of the remission of sins and the new life in Jesus Christ, a confirmation and guarantee that man's sins had been pardoned and annulled, that he was cleansed and purified for the rest of his life and therefore destined to salvation.<sup>39</sup> Calvin had been clear about the baptism of infants: as it was the sign of belonging to the Church and the community of the new covenant, it was important for all children of members of the community to be baptized unless there were specific and compelling impediments. Calvin rejected the Augustinian argument that infants who died unbaptized were destined to hell or limbo, but condemned the attitude of parents who were able to baptize their children but did not do so. It was a different matter for those who were not holy descendants of the faithful and were born outside the community of the new covenant and therefore from an "impure seed" ("seme impuro"). In this case, only their faith (in the age of reason) could guarantee their salvation (sanctification) and allow them to bless it with the sacrament of baptism.<sup>40</sup> Honoré used expressions that were perfectly in keeping with this position, stressing that faith was the only way for man to redeem the original sin and the resulting destiny of death, whether it were one's own faith or the faith of one's parents ("and if the root is holy, says the Apostle, then so are the branches"). Baptism was the sacrament of this faith, both of one's own faith (for those who have reached the age of reason) and the faith of one's

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those who despise the signs of the faith, and "because of this perversity of mind [...] do not receive their baptism which is the sacrament of the faith" ("in ragione di questa perversità d'animo [...] non ricevono il battesimo che è il sacramento della fede"), only those men "are condemned *de jure*" ("vengono condannati di diritto"); *Per la storia degli eretici italiani*, 154–55.

<sup>39</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II part, book IV, ch. xv.

<sup>40</sup> For an overview of the different interpretations of baptism in the age of Reformation, see A. Prosperi, "Battesimo e identità cristiana nella prima età moderna," in *Salvezza delle anime, disciplina dei corpi. Un seminario sulla storia del battesimo* (Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2006), 1–65: 39 ff. More specifically, for Calvin's vision of the sacrament and on his interpretation of pedobaptism, see Calvin, *Institutes*, book IV, ch. xv–xvii.

father (for those without the use of reason).<sup>41</sup> Moreover, just as “those who are born holy because of their parents’ faith, through baptism, [...] can enter the new life in Christ through the strength of their faith; so others, because of the faithlessness of their fathers, are born impure from an impure seed and cannot be baptized or reborn in Christ to eternal beatitude unless they are sanctified by their own faith.”<sup>42</sup>

After reiterating his point of view,<sup>43</sup> Pucci replied in an equally provocative manner that he could indeed accept this slight modification, but only on condition that the term “holy descendants of the faithful” should be taken to mean the entire human race, as he maintained that “we are all children of Adam and Noah.”<sup>44</sup> It was a dialogue of the deaf and there was no way the two viewpoints could be reconciled. According to the pseudo-Honoré, Pucci’s statements verged on the Pelagian heresy, as he seemed to be denying man’s original sin or even disregarding the grace of God, just like Pelagius had.<sup>45</sup> In his defence, Pucci underlined that he had never intended to deny the original sin; he wrote in his *Confutatio* that it was innate. He felt that this was not the

41 “Quis non videt pelagianorum haereseos deterrimum dogma eam legere? Dogma inquam quod negat homines nasci originis peccato infectos et ob id addictos morti qua tam diu detinentur, quam diu aut sua, aut parentum fide Christo ad vitam an ex eius morte consequendam, non inserentur. Huius fidei tum propriae in ratione utentibus tum paternae in rationis usu parentibus baptismus sacramentum est” (Honoré, *Primae theseos orthodoxa explanatio*, 95–96). With a clear reference to the penalty envisaged by Calvin for those parents who refused to baptize their children, Honoré added that faith did not stop being vivifying when, as Saint Augustine stated, the exigencies of the moment (and not contempt for religion) prevented someone from being baptized (“Vivifica esse fides non desinat cum, ut ait Augustinus, baptismi misterium non contempsit religionis sed articulus necessitatis excludit”; *ibid.*, 96).

42 “Et vero ut propter parentum fidem sancti nascuntur et per baptismum cum fas est et sine baptismo cum non licet, Christo ad vitam fidei vi inferi possunt; ita propter paternam incredulitatem impuri ex impuro semine prodeunt, et nisi sua fide sanctificantur non possunt baptizari, nedum in Christo ad beatitudinem sempiternam reviviscere” (*ibid.*, 96).

43 “Prius membrum huius meae theseos, ubi assero salutem omnium hominum ratione non abutentium, emendari posse iudicatis si non dicam omnes homines sed sanctam fidei- lium sobolem, cuius salutem vos tamen non asseritis sed haesitante dicitis. Servari posse credimus” (Pucci, *Confutatio*, 100).

44 “Ceterum ut officiis vobiscum certem, et cum mea veritate conciliare quaeram verba vestra, dico nullam fare de sensu inter nos dissensionem, si nomine sanctae fidelium sobolis intellegitis totum genus humanum; ut certe intelligere potestis et debetis cum simus omnes filii Adami et Noae, qui Patres fideles fuerunt et benedictio piorum patrum extendatui in millia, id est in infinitum” (Pucci, *Confutatio*, 100).

45 See *supra*, footnote 43.

point, as original sin had been “expiated, in all of us, by the blood of Christ, who died for each and every one of us, and therefore [...] it has been perfectly remitted in every man”; only by virtue of this benefit could it be claimed that every man is able to achieve eternal salvation, and certainly not by virtue of the absence of original sin.<sup>46</sup>

However, his opponent did not stop there; Pucci’s religious latitudinarianism was too far from his convictions to be ignored and the end product of Pucci’s thinking could not be shared. Following his line of reasoning, it seemed that God guaranteed eternal salvation even to the “faithless Jews, the apostate Turks, the libertine Epicureans, and to any other person absorbed in his religion or superstition, however impious or vile it may be.”<sup>47</sup> In his reply to these insinuations, Pucci reminded Honoré that man received enough efficacious grace to achieve salvation at birth, but this did not mean that he would definitely be saved: “Perfidious apostasy, impiousness, superstition and other vile practices provoke God’s anger towards any individuals who scorn the richness of His divine goodness, and these are destined to a second death, even if they have already been saved from the first death thanks to Christ.” If a man opposed and resisted divine grace, refusing the path that God had traced out for him, after reaching the age of reason, then his punishment was guaranteed.<sup>48</sup>

Amid all the invective hurled at him by his opponent,<sup>49</sup> Pucci’s sensibility must have been most wounded by the accusation that he supported arguments

46 “Quod ad pelagianam haeresim attinet, frustra fucum facitis imperitis, hisce odiosis nominibus; cum ego non negem, cum Pelagio, originale vitium, aut gratiae Dei derogem, aut commune aliquid habeam cum eius errore. Fateor enim nobis inesse originale vitium vel peccatum; sed idem dico expiatum, in omnibus, sanguine Christi, qui mortuus est pro omnibus et singulis, et ideo illud peccatum naturae ita perfecte curatum est in unoquoque, ac si in uno solo esset curatum, ut verbis D. Thomae” (Pucci, *Confutatio*, 100).

47 “Servabuntur perfidi iudei; servabuntur apostatae turcae; servabuntur epicuraei libertini, servabitur denique quilibet, in sua seu religione seu superstitione, quantumvis impia et scelerata” (Honoré, *Primae theseos orthodoxa explanatio*, 96).

48 “Nam perfidia apostasia, impietas, superstitione et cetera sclera congerunt iram Dei singulis, qui divitias divinae benignitatis contemnunt, ii enim mortem secundam accersunt, quamvis quatenus homines servati, et morte prima, per Christum, liberati sint” (Pucci, *Confutatio*, 101). Pucci went on writing that many other well-known Catholics from this and from other centuries, and even “your Zwingli”, shared this point of view (*ibid.*, 101–102).

49 Another part of Honoré’s accusations was addressed to Pucci’s second thesis concerning those millenaristic and prophetic aspects of his thought. This was the cornerstone of the thesis: “Having Saint John foreseen that after Satan and the Antichrist have been expelled and driven back to hell, those martyrs and saints who had taken part in the first resurrection will reign with Christ for a thousand years, and having declared slightly

that contradicted Roman orthodoxy. Revisiting the concept expressed in the opening lines of his *Explicatio* with emphasis,<sup>50</sup> Honoré wrote that Pucci's theses could never be accepted by Rome, because while he argued that "all men who died unbaptized before reaching the age of reason are saved by Christ [...], the Catholic Church, on the contrary, asserts that whoever is not baptized or circumcised is destined to damnation."<sup>51</sup> Honoré's observation was quite apposite. The Decree of the Council of Trent, approved on 17 June 1546, had been perfectly clear: Adam's sin had affected everybody, therefore even newborn babies who were too young to have committed any sins. As the original sin was transmitted through natural generation and not necessarily in a conscious manner, babies therefore needed to be baptized; the Tridentine fathers decided that anyone who denied this had to be excommunicated ("anatema sit").<sup>52</sup> However, these words supposedly pronounced by Frà Honoré must have seemed an unbearable affront to those like Pucci who had made their membership of the Catholic Church a badge of honour and had abjured to the Papal Nuncio a few years previously in the firm belief that they had every right to belong to the ranks the faithful in Rome.

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later in a very clear way that all that would happen in the Holy Land, I believe that the Christian faithful should wait for God's kingdom when the will of the celestial Father will be done on earth as in heaven" (see the original Latin version in *Per la storia degli eretici*, 155, but see also on the same issue *ratio* 98 of Pucci's *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*: "And after Satan and the Antichrist will be thrown and closed in the Tartar, that golden and divine kingdom will be built, a kingdom where God's will will be done on earth as in heaven and all the prophecies that predicted for Jerusalem and the Holy Land a prosperity worthy of such an expectation and such an author will be realized" ("Ma dopo che il diavolo e l'Anticristo saranno gettati e chiusi nel Tartaro, verrà edificato quel regno aureo e divino, dove la volontà di Dio sarà fatta così in terra così in cielo e saranno adempiti i numerosissimi vaticini che promettono a Gerusalemme e alla terra santa una prosperità degna di tanta aspettazione e di un tanto autore"); Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, p. 56. For all the charges of heresy addressed to Pucci by his opponent Honoré, in particular the one of having revived the doctrines of Cherintus, see Honoré, *Theseos secundae orthodoxa explanatio*, in BMV, cod. Ital. x. 166, 106–108.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *supra*.

<sup>51</sup> Honoré, *Primae theseos orthodoxa explanatio*, 95.

<sup>52</sup> *Conciliarum Oecomenicorum decreta*, curantibus G. Alberigo, P.P. Joannou, C. Leonardi, P. Prodi, consultante H. Jedin (Friburgi Brisgoviae, Herder, 1962), 666; A. Prosperi, *Dare l'anima. Storia di un infanticidio* (Turin, Einaudi, 2005), 187, who writes that that decree, strengthening the thesis according to which the sacrament's efficacy is based on the exact performance of the ritual ("ex opere operato") regardless of the faith of the person who receives the sacrament, paved the way to new and more serious contradictions.

## 2 In the Wake of St Thomas

Pucci felt that he was profoundly Catholic and he had been introduced as such to the French social milieu by d'Ancel, Henry of Navarre's agent.<sup>53</sup> It mattered little that he had continued to spread the same doctrines previously abjured in Prague or that these doctrines were considered to be against the dictates of Rome; he was still convinced that the opposite was true. He considered himself to be the true depository of St Thomas's thinking and stressed that no explicit position had been taken by the ecclesiastical hierarchy with reference to the damnation of unbaptized children (and by extension of unbaptized savages). He maintained that the condemnation in the Council decrees only referred to those who consciously refuse or scorn the sacrament of baptism after acquiring the use of reason.<sup>54</sup>

As he wrote to a friend in Prague in November 1592, at the Council of Trent "the disputes and sentences concerned only the indiscrete Anabaptists [who rebelled against the Church and the Christian Republic], who scorn the baptism of children and many other sacraments and holy traditions and speak falsely of the incarnation of the Son of God, of original sin and of many other doctrines". He therefore deduced that "those sentences and anathemata do not affect St Thomas, or myself, or similar Catholics who believe that all human nature is reblessed and effectively cleansed of that stain thanks to the sacrifice of Christ."<sup>55</sup> In other words, as far as original sin was concerned, Pucci believed that the Pope and the entire Catholic Church were in perfect alignment with his Thomistic thesis, but contrary to that of "St Augustine, continued by Calvinists and those Jesuits" who had so vigorously opposed him in Prague.<sup>56</sup>

Pucci felt he was the true depository of Thomistic thinking. He had reminded Clement VIII of this in a letter shortly before, querying the authority of the Apostolic Nuncio in Prague, in whose hands he had abjured in 1587: "In recent times it has come to pass what Monsignor Segu foretold to me and prophesied when he laid his hands upon my head, announcing to me that the spirit of St Thomas Aquinas will awake in me and be renewed."<sup>57</sup> In his *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* (1592), he therefore did not hesitate to show the affinity of his thought with St Thomas, underlining that "St Thomas himself most

53 On Pucci's relationship with D'Ancel, see *supra*, 138–139.

54 Letter to a friend in Prague [Nuremberg, mid-November 1592], in Firpo, *Scritti*, 137–142: 141–142.

55 *Ibid.*, 142.

56 *Ibid.*, 140.

57 Letter to Pope Clement VIII, 117.

openly affirms that original sin was remedied in each single man, teaching and demonstrating that the main purpose of Christ's incarnation was to remove original sin" and that furthermore "the expiation of Christ is to be extended to all mankind."<sup>58</sup> "Thus," he went on, "the true disciples of this holy doctor cannot deny in good faith that men possess sufficient effective rudiments and foundations of beatitude, especially, as he affirms that 'God would not forsake anyone born in the wilderness if he did that which was within him, that is to say, act righteously and behave correctly', just as the pagan centurion was not forsaken."<sup>59</sup> It is noticeable that Pucci's words echoed the lively debates in Spanish universities and their theology faculties after the discovery of the New World. Indeed, the image of the man born in the wild fuelled the long Iberian polemic about the condition of the inhabitants of the new American land. The discussions about St Thomas's concept of *fides implicita* enlivened rereadings of the *Secunda secundae* first by Vitoria and then by the authors of the second scholasticism, and returned in all their radicalism in the thinking of the Hieronymite José de Sigüenza at the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>60</sup>

58 Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 67–68; Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 68.

59 Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 66–67.

60 Cf. G. de Andrés, *Proceso inquisitorial del padre Sigüenza*, Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1975. More generally, see A. Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man. The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 1982). Pucci's quotations from Bartolomé de las Casas' *Brevissima relazione della distruzione delle Indie*, included in a passage concerning the massacre of thousands of natives "in regna peruviana" (A.E. Baldini, *Tre inediti di Francesco Pucci al cardinal nepote e a Gregorio XIV alla vigilia del suo 'rientro' a Roma*, in *Rinascimento* 39 (1999), 157–223: 216), as well as his constant invocation of Juan Gil, or Egidio, a well-known Spanish humanist and preacher from Olvera, accused of heresy in 1550, "condemned in Spain [...] where his body was burnt ten years after his death because of him having preached this augustinian teaching" ("condannato nella stessa Spagna, [...] [dove] il suo corpo fu bruciato dieci anni dopo la morte perché aveva predicato questa sentenza agostiniana"; Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 72), demonstrate Pucci's not superficial knowledge of the extra-European debate as well as his acquaintance with the world of Spanish heterodoxy. It is worth noting that Las Casas's *Brevissima relación* and the *Artes aliquot* (on which see *supra*, ch. 1), a work from which most of Pucci's contemporaries drew their information regarding Juan Gil, are the main writings that fostered the sixteenth-century Spanish *leyenda negra*. It is thus conceivable that Pucci knew those works through the anti-Spanish pamphlets circulating in England and France in the last decades of the sixteenth century; see, in addition to the classic work by W.S. Maltby *The Black Legend in England. The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558–1660* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1971), the entry *Legenda negra* by C. Gilly in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, 4 vols., ed. A. Prosperi, with the collaboration of V. Lavenia and J. Tedeschi (Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2010).

Pucci also claimed that his thinking coincided with St Thomas on topics such as baptism and the sacraments, and insisted that anyone who had not received baptism for reasons independent of their will should not be punished:

St Thomas agrees with us about the doctrine of the sacrament of baptism, when he teaches that “one person may be without it by his own will, while someone else may be lacking it, but not by his own will.” In the first case (according to St Thomas’s judgement), the shortcoming is seen as ruinous for free and rational men because of the contempt, but in the second case it is not. Indeed, a person’s will towards God is confirmed by his deeds. Therefore, no one is guilty of contempt towards baptism unless he opposes good spirits who encourage men to follow the Creator of all things and His sacraments in this life. The will of individual men desires baptism as a good thing, when it does not reject it, as we have seen above.<sup>61</sup>

These positions harked back to a partly ‘heterodox’ Dominican tradition passed down from the Archbishop of Florence, Antonino Pierozzi, through the teaching of Savonarola, to the authoritative theologian Tommaso de Vio, whose commentary on St Thomas’s *Summa* was censured by the Holy Office in Rome in the 1570s, and the much-debated controversialist Ambrogio Catarino Politi. With regard to the latter, Pucci invoked his well-known theory about limbo, the ‘antechamber’ to Paradise where unbaptized children were destined to wait until the Day of Judgement; he was clearly unaware that Politi’s most original theories had fallen into disrepute in the Roman hierarchy. Pucci admitted that de Vio had frequently provided him with inspiration, probably without knowing that one of the passages in his commentary on the *Summa* that was most vigorously censured by the Roman Inquisition dealt precisely with the statement that parents’ prayers could be equal in value to baptism when it was impossible for the sacrament to be administered.<sup>62</sup> It is therefore no coincidence that the Dominicans were Pucci’s greatest opponents in the Catholic sphere along with the Jesuits. The most notable of these was Giampaolo Nazari

61 Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 67.

62 Prosperi, *Dare l’anima*, 181. On the censures to Cajetan’s comment, see now C. Arnold, *Die Römische Zensur der Werke Cajetans und Contarinis (1558–1601). Grenzen der theologischen Konfessionalisierung* (Paderborn 2008); for the Calvinist censure of the same text, see I. Jostock, *La censure négociée. Le contrôle du livre à Gèneve 1560–1625* (Geneva, Droz, 2007), 129–135. On Pierozzi and his limbo theory see C. Franceschini, “Dibattiti sul peccato originale e sul Limbo a Firenze (1439–1450),” in *Salvezza delle anime*, 215–254: 233–237.

of Cremona, the theologian to the Nuncio in Prague, Cesare Speciano, who, in late 1592, produced a ferocious censure of *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, which had just been published in Leiden, noting the presence of no fewer than “fifty heresies, all condemned.”<sup>63</sup> He found it so “evil” in every single part, “so full of heresies, falsehoods and ignorance” that after “beginning to note some of these in the margin”, he “tired of going any further.”<sup>64</sup>

### 3 “Inhumanely Treated”. A Late Sixteenth-Century Dispute in Paris

Pucci’s original doctrinal proposals did not fit the logic of belonging to a particular school and showed to a certain extent how far the Council of Trent had been from ending the matter. The fact is that the time of tolerance and listening was long gone. In the heated religious clash between Catholics and Calvinists, there was no room for any independent voices like Pucci’s. The humiliation that Pucci had to suffer a few months after his controversy with the pseudo-Honoré should have given him a fairly clear signal. In February 1592, following his insistent requests, Pucci was received by Cardinal Jacques Davy du Perron<sup>65</sup>

63 Letter of Cesare Speciano to Cinzio Aldobrandini, December 1, 1592, Prague, in *Carta, Nunziature ed eresia*, 73–74 and doc. 3, *ibid.*, 155–156.

64 Letter of Cesare Speciano; *Carta, Nunziature ed eresia*, 76, and *ibid.*, appendix, doc. 4. It is entirely legitimate to assume, as Paolo Carta did (*ibid.*, 74), that those “few things noted at the margin” (“alcune cose notate nel margine”) are identifiable with the short, anonymous list of censures (“Francisci Pucci Florentini errores in libro ab eo impresso”) preserved among Aldobrandini’s papers (perhaps sent to him by Speciano himself), attached to Pucci’s letter to the Archbishop of Salzburg Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau (December 12, 1592, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 144–145), mailed from the archbishop to the Roman Secretary of State. Differently, Firpo supposed that the author of the censures was a theologian from Salzburg at the service of the archbishop (*Scritti*, 145). It is interesting to note, beyond all possible hypotheses, how the list of these eight censures constantly referred to the Tridentine decrees to demonstrate the groundlessness of Pucci’s doctrines, so as to prove wrong the claim that his teachings adhered perfectly to the ‘Tridentine’ spirit (Firpo, *Scritti*, 145–146, footnote 1; Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 230–231).

65 With the exception of J.E. Guba’s Ph.D thesis, *Cardinal Jacques Davy Du Perron: Conversion, Schism, and Politics in Early Modern France* (University of Virginia, 2000), we still lack a modern biography on Du Perron. Still useful, to a certain extent, are such nineteenth-century studies as P. Féret, *Le cardinal Du Perron, orateur, controvertiste, écrivain* (Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1969; first edition, Paris 1877), but see also the essays collected in *Le cardinal Jacques Davy Du Perron. Mélanges publiés à l’occasion du IV<sup>e</sup> centenaire de sa naissance* (Saint-Lô, Imprimere Jacqueline, 1956). A selection of his most important works has been republished in a facsimile edition (*Oeuvres diverses*, Gèneve, Slatkine Reprints,

(and by Cardinal Charles of Bourbon)<sup>66</sup> and invited to pit his wits in their presence against a young French jurist, Jean Duret.<sup>67</sup> Jacques Davy du Perron was a doctor's son who had converted to Calvinism and was a Protestant minister at Saint-Lô in Normandy. Count Jacques de Matignon had noticed his extraordinary memory skills and prodigious erudition, and introduced him to the court of Henry III. Abbot Jean Touchard, formerly the tutor of the Cardinal of Vendôme, had then introduced him to studying the works of the Fathers of the Church and guided him towards his conversion to Catholicism. From that moment on, nothing impeded his court career and he was soon chosen to be the official orator at the funerals of the poet Pierre de Ronsard (1586) and Mary Stuart (1587). His theological knowledge, talent for rhetoric and past as a Huguenot made Du Perron one of the most able anti-Protestant controversialists in the kingdom. After the death of Henry III, Abbot Touchard suggested that he enter the service of Cardinal Charles of Bourbon, where Pucci found him on his arrival in Paris. The Catholic League, of which Charles was one of the leaders, made strong demands for the new king, Henry IV, to convert. Jacques Davy du Perron made the League's demands his own, interpreting them in his own shrewd manner: he approached the King of Navarre in a gradual persuasive manner, guiding him over the years through the difficult phases of a choice that was by no means a foregone conclusion, thereby earning himself the title "Monsieur le Convertisseur".<sup>68</sup> He naturally made use of his rhetorical gifts and erudition: in the first months of 1591, he published an anonymous pamphlet in which he invited the monarch to remove the main

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1969). For basic biographical information, see the apposite entry in *Histoire et dictionnaire des guerres de religion*, 859–861, and, above all, to R. Snoeks' entry in *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, v. 14 (Paris, 1960), 1130–1136.

66 Charles II of Bourbon (1562–1594) was called Cardinal of Vendôme to distinguish him from his great-uncle and namesake, cardinal and ephemeral king of France (with the name of Charles X). When the latter died in May 1590 he inherited the title of cardinal of Bourbon. On him, see at least C. Laplatte's entry in *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, 10 (Paris, 1938), 117–118.

67 Our information about this disputation is deduced from some allusions made by Pucci himself in some of his writings and more explicitly from an unpublished letter of his from Dieppe, dated April 30, 1592, after the conclusion of the controversy. It is preserved in BSHPF, *Hotman*, 10, 1, cc. 233–234, and was brought to light some decades ago by C. Vivanti, *Lotta politica e pace religiosa in Francia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Turin, Einaudi, 1974; first edition, 1963), 214. We publish it for the first time in the Appendix to the present volume (cf. *infra*, Appendix); on its content, see also *infra*, ch. v.

68 See T. Wanegfelen, *Ni Rome ni Genève. Des fidèles entre deux chaires en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, Champion, 1997), 406–419.

pretext of the League's revolt by converting to Catholicism<sup>69</sup> and in the following year, he made his position clear by signing a public *Supplication et avis donné au Roy Henry IV de se faire catholique* ('Petition and Advice to King Henry IV to convert to Catholicism').<sup>70</sup> He also took a clear stance on the conciliar debate in those months: a General Council was barely feasible, since the Catholics would never be willing to allow the authority of previous Councils—especially the recent Council of Trent—to be questioned. A National Council, on the other hand, could only be convened by the King after his conversion, as otherwise the ecclesiastics would not obey him. In any case, it would not be able to pass any sovereign judgement on matters of faith, but could at most solemnize the King's conversion.<sup>71</sup> In the light of these brief remarks, it is difficult to imagine that Du Perron decided to receive Pucci because he was attracted by his political and religious proposal, his utopian appeal for a General Council summoned by Henry IV and his evocation of the universal salvation of the human race. It seems more plausible that Pucci's persistence in asking the King of France for a private audience to discuss his proposals through the influential mediation of his friend Guillaume d'Ancel persuaded Henry IV to solve the question by delegating the task to Du Perron, who he trusted. We do not know the nature of the mandate that the King gave him and so we cannot say whether the King wanted to rid himself of his intrusive postulant in a ruthless way. What is clear, however, is that Pucci was "inhumanely treated" in this dispute, as he complained shortly thereafter in a letter to Pope Clement VIII.<sup>72</sup> The central issue was once again Pucci's idea that "Christ is an effective saviour of all men [as long as men exist], and [that] eternal death is not inevitable except for those who bring it upon themselves because of their inhumanity

69 The pamphlet's title is *Discours sur une question d'Estat de ce temps. Question: que le royaume de France se fait il catholique? S'il se faisoit catholique son royaume seroit incontinent en paix . . .*, 1591. The booklet has been correctly ascribed to Jacques Davy Du Perron by C. Vivanti, *Lotta politica*, 205.

70 Angers, 1592.

71 Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome ni Gèneve*, 408. The identification, made by Francis Higman, of the French cardinal as the author of the *Examen pacifique de la doctrine des huguenots* (1589), a pamphlet singing the praise of the reconciliation between Catholics and Huguenots and diminishing the doctrinal differences which divided the two parties and questioning the legitimacy of the Council of Trent, seems to me, in the light of these considerations, honestly too daring; see F. Higman, "The Examen pacifique de la doctrine des huguenots, Jacques Davy du Perron and Henry IV (1994)," now in idem, *Lire et découvrir* (Geneva, Droz, 1998), 583–599.

72 Letter to Clement VIII, 149.

and their perverseness in the way they resist nature and God.”<sup>73</sup> In their denial of the efficacy of the salvific benefit of Christ for individuals, encouraged by the support of the Sorbonne doctors and theologians, Duret and du Perron maintained that divine grace was sufficient but not efficacious for purposes of eternal salvation.<sup>74</sup> In other words, it was not efficacious “except for those who receive special grace and baptism”; the “countless people lacking it” would certainly “perish for all eternity”.<sup>75</sup> However, in addition to the substance of the controversy, it was the manner in which the proud Florentine exile was treated that mortified him. He provided evidence of the humiliation, insults and intimidation that he had been subjected to in a letter from Dieppe at the end of April. Instead of being warmly welcomed with his salvific message for the entire French nation, this “foreigner” (“straniero”) had been expelled from Paris after a controversy during which, without the comfort of even a single

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73 Cf. the letter from Dieppe, *infra*, Appendix. The translation from Latin is mine.

74 *Ibid.*

75 This is what we learn directly from Pucci: “It happened in France in the month of February of this year in the entourage of a very high prelate, whose name I will not reveal out of respect. The Sorbonne’s theologians and doctors at his service harshly deny that the salvific benefit of Christ is efficacious for individual men, and come up with some ‘sufficiency’ which is not at all efficacious, if not for those who receive a special mercy and the sacrament of baptism, which we know countless men are devoid of. Thus, according to their opinion, all of these men perish for eternity” (“Accadde in Francia nel mese di febbraio di quest’anno presso un altissimo prelato che non nominiamo per riguardo, i cui teologi e dottori della Sorbona aspramente negano che il beneficio salvifico di Cristo sia efficace per i singoli uomini e s’inventano una qualche “sufficienza” per nulla “efficace” se non per chi riceva la grazia speciale e il battesimo di cui è certo che innumerevoli uomini sono privi, e quindi, a loro giudizio, questi periscono in eterno”); *Prefatory Epistle to the readers*, in Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 7; but see also *ibid.*, 9, where Pucci writes “against those schools which assert Christ’s salvific sufficiency but deny its salvific efficacy for each single man” (“contro le scuole che asseriscono certo la sufficienza salvifica del Cristo ma negano l’efficacia salutare di essa in ciascun individuo”); or previously when he returns to his controversy with Duret: “Before the conversion of Constantine the Great, during those three hundred years when the strength of truth and reason more than education or other carnal knowledge held humankind firmly bound to the Christian religion, Duret’s harsh sentence [“regarding original sin as the main cause of men’s ruin and asserting that the failure to be baptized caused eternal death”] was completely unknown” (“Prima della conversione del grande Costantino, durante quei trecento anni, in cui la forza della verità e della ragione, più che l’educazione o un altro studio carnale, teneva saldamente gli uomini nella religione cristiana, fu del tutto sconosciuta la durissima sentenza [“sul vizio originale in modo da giudicarlo imputabile per la rovina degli uomini, o reputasse che per la mancanza del battesimo qualcuno perisca in eterno”] di cui si imbevve il nostro avversario Duret”); *ibid.*, 59.

witness in his favour, he had been forced into a corner and compelled to face “many of your colleagues and servants well-versed in sophistry.”<sup>76</sup> In this way, a few weeks after the event, Pucci pronounced his curse against his opponents, as if to obtain compensation for the affront he had suffered, appealing to the “Tribunal of God the Almighty and the Most Righteous”:

Before the Tribunal of God the Almighty and the Most Righteous, before the avenger of infant children, widows, foreigners and all the afflicted who sincerely believe in Him and invoke Him, I want to summon, and summon for the same reason, you, the cardinal of Bourbon, your Perron and Duret, and the others who conspired against me, God’s servant, in the month of February in the present year, while I was suggesting salutary remedies for you and for your country and you subjected me to insults after I had been the object of ridicule, so that you may support your cause before the end of this year and be accountable for why you showed yourselves to be so inhospitable, inhuman and unjust towards a man endowed with pure charity, full of passion for your kingdom with its many conflicts, who brought the water of the celestial doctrine best suited to extinguish the passions of all parties involved.<sup>77</sup>

If he did not obtain his due moral compensation before the established deadline, an inevitable fate of death would befall them as divine punishment for their wickedness:

Know ye also that this is the strength of my summons, that within the limit of one year you shall die your death for having attempted such an evil act before God unless in the meantime you abandon the defence of that evil cause and give me satisfaction.<sup>78</sup>

The greater the rage Pucci built up towards his enemies, the more clearly he realized they had done their utmost to present him in a bad light to Henry IV, also arranging to have him expelled from Dieppe, where he had gone in order to meet the King and convince him of the validity of his proposal.

I offered my services to the King, who expressed the opinion that my work would be useful to the common cause if I waited for the positive

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76 Letter from Dieppe (cf. *infra*, Appendix).

77 *Ibid.*

78 *Ibid.*

results of the Council that will be held in the presence of Pope Clement, to whom, God willing, I shall soon present myself [...], but [...] I have recently learned from reliable sources that you are striving to add a new insult to the past offences by having me expelled from this city.<sup>79</sup>

Four months later in August 1592, Pucci showed that he was still suffering from this blow: in a letter to Clement VIII enclosed with a volume written and hastily published following the dispute, he returned to the subject of his humiliation: "I think that you have understood how inhumanely I was treated in France by the Cardinal of Bourbon and how I was obliged to refer the matter to the Celestial Tribunal. I tried then, as I still do, to make it easier for the young prince and prelate to make amends and document himself more efficiently, because his masters are waiting more for terrestrial assistance than celestial charity."<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the Pope was only the first on a long list of people to whom Pucci hastened to send a copy of his work. These inevitably included Charles de Bourbon; Pucci wrote to him once again, attempting to persuade him to correct the harsh judgements which he had pronounced on his doctrines through a third party:

Even though I did not find among your courtiers, or Highly Illustrious Prince and Very Reverend Bishop, the grace that I hoped for to be able to explain things that would have procured greater peace and tranquillity to your soul and (would have guaranteed) the safety of the flock entrusted to your care, nevertheless I have never desisted and will never desist in my duties towards you and your family and I do not give up hope of finding more generous men that I will try to move away from the study of earthly groups and factions, guiding them instead towards the Celestial Court of the Supreme and Universal Pontiff and the King.<sup>81</sup>

Further on, using his recently printed pamphlet as a weapon, he added:

Mindful of this responsibility of mine, O Illustrious Prince, and increasingly convinced that the things revealed to me by God deserve not to be scorned, but to be savoured by important men of the Church such as

79 *Ibid.*

80 Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 149. The reference is to *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* (1592), on which see *infra*, ch. vi.

81 Letter to Cardinal Charles of Bourbon, The Hague [?], August 1592, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 127–129, quotation at p. 128.

yourself, I published a booklet in which I condensed all my reasoning against schools and vernacular theologians, who depend more on meat and blood than on the heavenly father and who deal more with specific good than universal good.<sup>82</sup>

#### 4 At the Margins of the “de auxiliis” Controversy

Besides the scarce impact of this missive—shared by various other letters that Pucci sent to a number of influential French thinkers—<sup>83</sup> the focus of the dispute was once again the issue of baptism and the fate of the unbaptized dead; above all, the words of Pucci's opponents echoed another controversy occurring elsewhere. *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis* (Concord of Free Will with the Gift of Grace) had been published in 1588 by the Jesuit Luis de Molina, marking the beginning of a long *de auxiliis* dispute between the Dominicans (Banesians) and the Jesuits (Molinists) that only ended in 1607 without any winners or losers after decisive action was taken by Pope Paul v. In brief, Luis de Molina interpreted the question of the relationship between individual freedom and divine grace by maintaining that the latter was only efficacious by virtue of the effort of human will and acceptance of good. The Spanish Dominicans strongly opposed this concept of *gratia efficax* that infallibly guarantees the meritoriousness of inward and outward acts and with them the highway to salvation; the most notable of them was Domingo Bañez, the author of *Apología de los hermanos dominicos* (“Apology of the Dominican Brothers”) (1595). They made the distinction between sufficient grace, which only grants the power to act well (and is granted to all men), and efficacious grace that prompts good deeds (only granted to the predestined or foreknown).<sup>84</sup> By stretching the terms of the question somewhat, Duret and his influential protectors now believed that Pucci's opinions dangerously reflected the ideas of Luis de Molina.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, his enemies did not make

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. vi.

<sup>84</sup> There is a vast bibliography on the *de auxiliis* controversy; see, most recently, P. Broggio, *La Teologia e la politica. Controversie dottrinali, curia romana e monarchia spagnola tra Cinque e Seicento* (Florence, Olschki, 2009).

<sup>85</sup> Enrico De Mas has rightly recalled the *de auxiliis* controversy in relation to Pucci's *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, published in 1592. However, his attempt to ascribe Pucci's ideas to the teachings of Luis de Molina seems forced (De Mas, *Prodromo*, in Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, viii).

use of fanciful “invention”, as he defined it, but the most recent product of a theological controversy that was destined to take centre stage for many years to come.

The whole issue was naturally more complex than Pucci’s opponents tended to present it, yielding to the requirements of controversy. Shortly before the publication of Molina’s *Concordia*, there was a violent dispute—the so-called *controversia lovaniensis*—that set the Jesuits against the group of Belgian university bishops, most notably with Father Lessius opposing the theology faculties in Leuven and Douai. The subject of the dispute was a surprising foretaste of the questions that were soon at the centre of the *de auxiliis* controversy. When Father Lessius was repeatedly pressed by the Board of Teachers at the Faculty of Theology in Leuven to present a list of the conclusions taught, thereby subjecting him to their judgement, one of the first people he consulted was the influential Robert Bellarmine. The letter he sent in June 1587 provided a clear account of the dispute in progress, but above all gave a passionate defence of his doctrinal positions, a tormented essay on his theological anthropology, which is worth quoting in full:

The polemic revolves almost entirely around the question of sufficient assistance, which [the theologians of the faculty] deny that God offers to all, and the matter of efficacious grace, which they define in a manner that differs totally from ours. Indeed, as far as I have understood in the course of numerous conversations, [...] they teach if two people are encouraged and taught equally and sufficiently about faith and conversion by a rousing preventive grace, in order to have their acceptance, there needs to be a further grace that precedes this consensus and makes them accept, and that it cannot happen that one accepts and the other does not, except when efficacious grace is granted to one and not to the other. [...] These statements barely seem to be in agreement with the Council of Trent and for this reason we teach instead that efficacious grace is that with which God moves [souls] urging them and preparing them through inspiration, inclinations of the will or feelings, in such a way that He knows will have an effect: and this, in our opinion, constitutes the ordinary efficacy of grace. For this reason, if two people are spurred on and prepared sufficiently for a certain act, one of them may accept and the other may refuse without any new grace before acceptance.<sup>86</sup>

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86 F. Motta, *Bellarmino. Una teologia politica* (Brescia, Morcelliana, 2005), 505–506.

Lessius therefore believed that man is prepared for faith and conversion by preventive grace (“excitans et praeveniens”), which is also efficacious, that is to say able to guarantee salvation because it is dispensed according to the possible effects that it will have on individual inclinations. It is consequently the latter—the second causes—that freely determines the supernatural destiny of man without any need for the intervention of further grace.<sup>87</sup>

Confronted with positions such as these, which do not appear far removed from the concept of sufficient and efficacious grace proposed by Pucci, Bellarmine hinted at a “possibly unenthusiastic but fully positive judgement”<sup>88</sup> that he reiterated ten years later in 1597 in the long memorial addressed to Pope Clement VIII, which effectively summarized the strategy he had followed throughout the episode. It was intended to distinguish the doctrines professed in Jesuit colleges from the position of Luis de Molina. Bellarmine’s condemnation of the latter was clear: he could in no way accept the idea that “the efficacy of grace depends on human will, since if man wishes to cooperate with sufficient grace, then it is made efficacious, while if he does not so wish, then it is inefficacious.”<sup>89</sup> To Bellarmine’s way of thinking, the problem lay not so much in discussing the existence of efficacious grace—no Catholic would ever expressly deny its existence—as in what was meant by efficacious grace, and the only correct (and not “extreme”) way was expressed clearly by Father Lessius.

It is hard to say how much Pucci knew about these polemics, which began in 1587, just a year and a half before he drafted his *De praedestinatione*, but one may fairly hypothesize that the double dedication with which he lauded Bellarmine—*De regno Christi* is also dedicated to him—was not so much wishful thinking aimed at persuading the most authoritative theologian in Rome that his ideas were right as the expression of a reasonable hope of being heard, the statement of a doctrinal affinity which Pucci, more or less correctly, felt he had with regard to his position. This was the same affinity that had made him write that “Bellarmine, who recognizes that the Sacraments are instruments or contracts that declare divine grace, thinks more accurately than those who turn the Sacraments into something similar to poultices or the channels of

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* On Lessius, see also S. Tutino, *Empire of Souls. Robert Bellarmine and the Christian Commonwealth*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 49–64.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 510. On the state of isolation suffered by the Flemish Jesuits after the official prohibition of Leys’ doctrines, see *ibid.*, 512, 514.

<sup>89</sup> According to the lucid definition given by Bellarmine in his memorial addressed to Pope Clement VIII in 1597; *ibid.*, 491–92. For Bellarmine’s views on the teachings of Molinas, see also M. Biersack, *Inizia Bellarminiana. Die Prädestinationslehre bei Robert Bellarmin sj bis zu seinen Löwener Vorlesungen 1570–1576* (Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989), 375–82.

divine grace, and yet these expressions can also be tolerated, provided that one cannot deduce from the lack of the Sacraments alone that there is deprivation of faith or eternal life.”<sup>90</sup>

Pucci was judged wrong by these events, along with his sensitivity and his generous attempt to find points of contact with Catholic doctrine and his desperate effort to meet influential people who might in some way legitimize his stance. While in the case of the sacramental doctrine, Pucci possibly over-stretched the literal meaning of Bellarmine’s doctrine, shaping it to the requirements of his discourse,<sup>91</sup> the fact that he involved Bellarmine in his writings was probably one of the main reasons that prompted the Jesuit Order to rally against him, as if they wished to rid themselves of the spectre of an embarrassing similarity of views. From Father Johannes Aquense of Prague to Nicolaus Serarius,<sup>92</sup> the Jesuits stood out as his fiercest opponents, as their first concern was to defend the complete orthodoxy of their influential theologian. Pucci was therefore the object of hostility of both Calvinists and Catholics, crushed by the accusation of Pelagianism and Molinism and caught fast between two other accusations: having promised men divine mercy that was so extensive that it could include the unholy and the faithless, and having betrayed the dictates of the Council of Trent. His experience in Paris left him a defeated man. His political proposal and doctrinal message fell on deaf ears in the country which he had pinned his profoundest hopes on and in the circles closest to Henry IV, where he had expected his irenic aspirations to receive a favourable hearing. The volume he wrote immediately after these disputations to explain his reasons to a wider public (*De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, 1592) was widely distributed throughout Europe, but fared no better: it was harshly attacked by the Jesuit Nicolaus Serarius, the Calvinist François Du Jon and the Lutheran Lukas Osiander.<sup>93</sup> There was no support for his proposal based on the exaltation of the universal benefit of Christ for all believers in a Europe that was squarely divided between Catholics and Protestants.

90 Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 72–73.

91 On Bellarmin’s doctrine of the sacraments, see G.J. Békés, “La dottrina sacramentaria del Bellarmino: la controversia del sec. XVI alla luce dell’odierna dottrina,” in *Roberto Bellarmino arcivescovo di Capua teologo e pastore della Riforma cattolica*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Capua, settembre–ottobre 1988, ed. G. Galeota (Capua, 1990), 53–68.

92 On the Jesuit father Aquense, cf. *supra*, ch. III; on Serarius, cf. *infra*, ch. VI.

93 The reference is to the volumes published by Serarius, *Contra pelagiani*; Osiander, *Refutatio*; and Junius, *Catholicae doctrinae*. On these three works of controversy, cf. *infra*, ch. VI. On the diffusion of Pucci’s ideas all over Europe, see also Biagioli, “Incontri italo-svizzeri nell’Europa del tardo Cinquecento. Francesco Pucci e Samuel Huber,” *Rivista storica italiana* 111 (1999), 363–422.

# Jean Hotman and French Irenicism

## 1 A Possible Meeting in Paris

The present archival location of the unpublished letter written by Francesco Pucci from Dieppe mentioned in the previous chapter provides useful elements to focus on the nature of his relationship with the late sixteenth-century French irenicist movement and, more generally, reflect on possible connections between his religious and political doctrines and the leanings of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European irenicism. The only surviving copy of the letter sent in April 1592 to Cardinal Charles de Bourbon is kept in the Bibliothèque de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français in Paris, among papers that belonged to the French irenicist Jean Hotman de Villiers, the eldest son of the renowned jurist François Hotman.<sup>1</sup> Born in Lausanne in 1552, Jean travelled around with his father for the first twenty years of his life, moving between Paris, Geneva and Basle, before gaining his independence in 1579 by becoming the private tutor of the children of the English Ambassador in Paris, Sir Amias Paulet. He then followed the latter to England, where he became a *habitué* of the lively English intellectual circles close to Elizabeth I's Court.<sup>2</sup> Appointed Secretary to the Earl of Leicester, Robert Dudley, he spent nearly three years in his service in the Low Countries and following the assassination of William the Silent, Dudley received the Queen's special protection. On Dudley's death, Hotman sought the protection of Elizabeth's new favourite, the Earl of Essex, but his thoughts increasingly turned towards the troubles in his homeland. In 1585, the then King of Navarre appointed Jean counsellor and "maître de requêtes" as a reward for the services performed by his father François, and when Henry III's sudden death raised Henry of Navarre to the throne, Hotman could not miss the opportunity to return to Paris and make his

<sup>1</sup> On François Hotman it is sufficient to refer to the classic biography by D.R. Kelley, *François Hotman: A Revolutionary Ordeal* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> On Jean Hotman's first English stay, as well as on his special relationship with England, see G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, *Jean Hotman's English Connection* (Amsterdam, Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie Van Wetenschappen, 1990). On Jean Hotman's papers in Paris, see the brief reconstruction made by Meyjes, "Jean Hotman's Syllabus of Eirenicical Literature," in *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c1500–c1750*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1979), 175–193: 180–181.

contribution to the lively political debate in progress about the possible ways of ending the tragic civil war ravaging the whole country.<sup>3</sup>

Speculation about why Pucci's letter to Cardinal Charles de Bourbon ended up in Hotman's hands is no easy matter. Considering the tone of the missive, it is unlikely that it was given or even shown to Hotman by its recipient: only a sudden act of rashness or excessive arrogance could have driven the French Cardinal to present a text full of insults to a leader of the Reformed Church. It is more likely that Pucci passed the letter on to the French irenicist himself, probably motivated by his desire to find the intellectual fellowship and human comfort that he needed after his dramatic dispute in Paris. They may even have met before, as both were in Paris before the night of St Bartholomew and in Basle at the end of 1578. Pucci had gone to the Swiss city at the request of his friend Francesco Betti for a dispute with Fausto Sozzini, while Hotman had just moved there with his father after leaving Geneva. They were also both in England in 1581, where the Florentine stayed for two years, possibly paying for the rashness of his doctrines with a prison term,<sup>4</sup> and where Hotman had just arrived from Paris in Paulet's service. By themselves, these coincidences do not add up to anything more than mere hypothesis. In Paris, however, during a stay that lasted almost a year, it cannot have been difficult for Pucci to get in touch with this theology enthusiast and Reformed irenicist who divided his time between Basle (where he managed his recently deceased father's estate) and the French capital.<sup>5</sup> Hotman had just completed a controversialist work entitled *Antichopinus*, entirely devoted to demolishing the oration in which René Chopin had celebrated the Pope's excommunication of Henry IV.<sup>6</sup> He

3 More generally, on Jean Hotman, in addition to the quoted essays by Posthumus Meyjes, see the still useful work by F. Schickler, "Hotman de Villiers et son temps," *Bulletin historique et littéraire de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 17 (1868), 98–111, 145–161, 401–13, 464–76, 513–33; as well as D.B. Smith, "Jean de Villiers Hotman," *The Scottish Historical Review* 14 (1917), 147–166; C. Vivanti, *Lotta politica e pace religiosa in Francia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Turin, Einaudi, 1974; first edition, 1963), 189 ff.; T. Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome ni Genève. Des fidèles entre deux chaires en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, Champion, 1997), 456–464; and, lastly, R. Descimon, "La bibliothèque de Jean Hotman de Villiers (1636)," in *Conflits politiques, controverses religieuses. Essai d'histoire européenne aux 16<sup>e</sup>–18<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2002), 211–221.

4 On Pucci's second stay in England and his daring Nicodemite strategy, see *supra*, ch. III.

5 The hypothesis that Pucci and Hotman met in Paris was first proposed, with appropriate caution, by C. Vivanti, *Lotta politica*, 215.

6 *Antichopinus, seu epistola congratulatoria M. Nicodemi Turlupini ad M. Renatum Chopinum Sanctae Unionis Hispanitologallicae advocatum incomparabilissimum*, s. l. 1592. Chopin's oration was published in 1591; cf. Vivanti, *Lotta politica*, 195 and footnote 2.

had then been involved in a discussion about the chances of achieving religious peace and resolving the delicate question of the succession to the French throne from early 1590 onwards, together with various French Protestant ministers and *politiques*.<sup>7</sup> The dramatic problem first emerged with the death of the Duke of Anjou in 1584. The facts are well known, but it is worth summarizing them. To prevent the heretic Henry of Navarre acceding to the throne, the most intransigent Catholics founded a League that was determined to use arms to stop it from happening. In September 1585, Pope Sixtus V excommunicated Henry, declaring him unworthy of the succession. The Paris Parliament and the party of *politiques* were irritated by the Pope's meddling in French affairs, so they organized themselves to defend the freedom of the Gallican Church, seeking to reunite moderate Catholics and Henry of Navarre's Protestant supporters in a single faction opposed to the Catholic front, which consisted of the League, the Jesuits, the Guise family and Spanish allies. The situation deteriorated on Henry III's death in August 1589. The dying king had named Henry of Navarre as his successor and at the first public opportunity—the Declaration of Saint-Cloud—he pledged to "maintain and preserve the Catholic religion in France in its entirety, without any innovation or change", adding that he desired no more than "to be instructed by a worthy general or national council, in order to follow and observe whatever is decided and concluded, promising to summon it within six months or even sooner".<sup>8</sup> The King's words were sufficiently ambiguous to allow scope for a wide range of partisan interpretations; a veritable battle broke out after the Declaration with a series of pamphlets in which each political party tried to persuade the King to support its interests. While the *ligueurs* continued to invoke resistance to the heretical king and began to prepare for the military occupation of Paris,<sup>9</sup> the King's call for the imminent summoning of a Council unsurprisingly stirred up great enthusiasm among the *politiques* and French irenicists on either side of the religious divide. Pamphlets like *Devis familier d'un gentilhomme catholique françois*, or *Le Pacifique. Colloque de deux François, au quel il est monstré combien est deplorable l'horrible effusion de sang chrestien qui se fait par toute l'Europe [...] sous le titre de religion* compiled by Théophile Friderik, or *Advis sur la nécessité*

7 This can be clearly deduced from a letter addressed to him by the reformed minister Merlin on April 1, 1590; see C. Vivanti, *Lotta politica*, 200–204.

8 Declaration of August 3, 1589, confirmed in August 1590 and again the following year, in Jourdan, Isambert, Decrusy, eds., *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises*, Paris, 1827–1833, 29 vols., 15, 3–5; Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome ni Genève*, 412–413.

9 F.J. Baumgartner, *Radical Reactionaries: the Political Thought of the French Catholic League* (Geneva, Droz, 1976).

*du concile et sur la forme de le rendre legitime et libre pour l'union chrestienne* by Pierre de la Primaudaye, printed in 1590–91, incessantly invoked “a general or national council lawfully summoned in all liberty and safety”, with the encouragement of the authoritative Philippe Duplessis-Mornay.<sup>10</sup> The aim of this religious propaganda work was to emphasize the points of contact and possible doctrinal convergence between the Catholic and Reformed religions in order to achieve the long-awaited religious pacification of the kingdom under the aegis of the new king of France.<sup>11</sup>

In the course of the ensuing fiery polemical battle played out in private correspondence and pamphleteering propaganda, a short work was published by Cardinal du Perron entitled *Discours sur une question d'Estat de ce temps. Question: Que le roy ne se fait il catholique? S'il se faisoit catholique son royaume seroit incontinent en paix* (1591), in which the future “grand convertisseur” of Henry IV expressed the desire of many Catholic realists by inviting the Bourbon to convert as soon as possible: the influential Cardinal felt that this was the best way to blunt the *ligueurs*’ most dangerous weapon and forestall a possible revolt. He wrote that the summoning of a national council could be most useful to formalize the King’s conversion.<sup>12</sup> Needless to say, the pamphlet not only annoyed the *ligueurs*, but also made the French Reformed movement indignant; du Perron’s view seemed radically different from the calls for a council to discuss and resolve the religious crisis caused by the death of Henry III. Nicolas Séguier, one of the best-known Calvinist ministers in France, wasted no time in producing his *Response à la supplication adressée au roy pour se faire catholique, avec moyens nouveaux pour induire Sa Majesté d'aller à la messe*, in which he flatly rejected the French Cardinal’s arguments. For example, he contested the prospect of the king being abandoned by his Catholic subjects, seeing it as an artfully used argument to encourage Henry to convert; he maintained that history was full of heretic sovereigns loyally obeyed by prelates and councils.<sup>13</sup> Séguier requested a return to the rules observed in the early

<sup>10</sup> On Duplessis-Mornay and his irenical commitment alongside Henry IV, see now the important work by H. Daussy, *Les Huguenots et le Roi. Le Combat politique de Philippe Duplessis-Mornay 1572–1600* (Geneva, Droz, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> On this type of literature, see especially C. Vivanti, *Lotta politica*, 132–186; on the fierce resistance to these positions exerted by Théodore de Bèze and the majority of the Reformed leaders fearful that any compromise would betray the truth of Scriptures and would encourage the king to abandon the Protestant religion, see S.M. Manetsch, *Theodore Beza and the Quest for Peace in France, 1572–1598* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, Brill, 2000), 220 ff.

<sup>12</sup> T. Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome ni Genève*, 408; C. Vivanti, *Lotta politica*, 205.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

centuries of Christianity, saying that it would only be possible to rediscover the purity of the Christian faith by consulting the texts of the Fathers of the Church and the decisions of the early Councils. This wise ancient guide would enable them to reach the doctrinal and liturgical agreement which many desired and which the Reformed minister had taken the trouble to formalize in seven *poincts principaux tendans à l'union des Chrestiens qui doibvent ester examines et mis en deliberation en ung Concile national de l'Eglise gallicane*. The author had not intended to publish it, but only to distribute it shrewdly in manuscript form to provide material for the ongoing debate between scholars. In the same period, as we shall soon see, Jean Hotman was beginning to collect a series of irenicist texts in his private library, hoping that they would help find a solution to the religious struggle tearing France apart. It is perhaps no coincidence that the only surviving copy of *Response* and of *Points principaux* is among his papers alongside Pucci's letter and du Perron's pamphlet.<sup>14</sup> The three documents—du Perron's *Supplication et avis donné au roy Henry IV de se faire catholique par le cardinal du Perron*, Séguier's *Réponse au dit avis* and *Points principaux* and Pucci's letter from Dieppe—were registered in this order among the French irenicist's papers. Hotman therefore saw Pucci's letter as an element in this wider discussion, one which was in no way neutral. The title chosen to file the letter under is clear: *Littera Francisci Puccii qua cardinales Borbonium et Peronium et Duretum citat ad tribunal Dei* ('Francesco Pucci's letter in which he summons Cardinals Bourbon and Perron and Duret to the divine court'). In the battle of words between the Cardinal and the Reformed minister, Jean Hotman had unhesitatingly supported the latter and Pucci's violent attack on the influential French prelate's insolence suited him perfectly. Like Séguier, Hotman rejected the option of a France with two confessions and could not bear the idea of a royal conversion that was independent from a common design for peace. They both shared the idea of a Unitarian Gallican Church founded on a common Christian credo, the broad doctrinal agreement that the National Council was expected to produce. As it has been underlined, Hotman certainly developed a more "modern" outlook compared to the Reformed minister's ideas. The main feature of his irenicist proposal was its attempt to overcome the alternative between union (or harmony) and tolerance. His exhortations for harmony always showed his awareness that doctrinal union was a necessary phase of transition, even though it might last so long that it would appear to be definitive. It was a stage that was expected to lead from irenicism to ecumenism; unlike the concept of tolerance, the latter

<sup>14</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque de la Société d'Histoire du Protestantisme Français (henceforth cited as BSHPF), *Hotman*, 10, vol. I, ff. 188–212.

doctrine aimed to single out the different doctrinal sensibilities rather than juxtapose them.<sup>15</sup> In any case, the basic perspective was still very close to that of Séguier and other French irenicists and, more interestingly for us, in many ways compatible with Pucci's ideas. It is no surprise that Hotman welcomed Pucci's criticism of the obtuse formalistic attachment to "obscure terms and names" which transformed faith and religion "into a credulity of misunderstood words" and "into blind imitation of our kinsfolk and ministers". He also appreciated his exaltation of Henry IV, "a great King who has ardently turned all his spirit to religion and to the Holy Council, and is glorified by his faith and his strength", his harsh attacks against the Holy See's short-sighted attitude to the king of France, his proposal to return to the model of the primitive Church of the Apostles in which decisions were taken "with the unanimous consent of the faithful" ("unanimi fidelium consensu"), his candid conciliarist choice and the redefinition of the Pope's authority contained in some of his statements ("the Pope is not worthy of being heard more than the other faithful"; "papam [...] non esse plus audiendum, quam caeteros homines").<sup>16</sup> The esteem was reciprocal and some of the French irenicist's work seemed to have been written deliberately to fire Pucci's spirit. Indeed, in terms that Pucci would soon endorse, Hotman wrote: "there is only one Christian and Catholic Church spread all over the world and consisting of all those who know and recognize Jesus Christ as the author of their salvation" ("il n'y a qu'une église chrétienne et catholique, espandue par tout le monde et composée de tous ceux qui connaissent et reconnaissent Jesus-Christ pour auteur de leur salut").<sup>17</sup> The presence of Pucci's letter among Jean Hotman's papers therefore confirmed an encounter between two compatible points of view. However, something went wrong; something was destined to belie the picture portrayed thus far.

## 2 The Reasons for an Exclusion

Hotman decided to compile a list of the best irenicist literature of the day in 1593. His correspondence from then on reflects his frenzied text collecting,

<sup>15</sup> Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome ni Genève*, 456–464, 481–482.

<sup>16</sup> On the two long letters written by Pucci from Frankfurt in August 1591, respectively addressed to cardinal nephew Paolo Camillo Sfondrati and Pope Gregory XIV, see also *supra*, ch. III.

<sup>17</sup> *Que par la S.te Escriture on ne peut prouver, au moins par passage exprez, plusieurs choses que nous croyons*, BSHPF, Hotman, 10, vol. 11, ff. 13–15; quoted by Vivanti, *Lotta politica*, 215–216.

which many members of the European literary *respublica* contributed to by indicating books, sending volumes or simply providing food for thought. In 1607, after more than ten years' hard work, Hotman decided to summarize his efforts. He supported the publication of a collection of *Sententiae de pace Ecclesiae* ('Sentences on the peace of the Church') by members of the Reformed front that were most deeply involved in the matter of conciliation between religions, such as Melantone, Bucero and others.<sup>18</sup> He reprinted *De officio pii viri* ('On the task of the good man') by the Catholic irenicist Cassander (first published anonymously in 1561), adding a list of the best irenicist literature from previous decades (1533–1607) to the appendix. This included sixty-two works and was entitled *Doctorum aliquot ac piorum virorum libri et epistolae, ex quibus videri potest quam non sit difficilis controversiarum in religione conciliatio si controvertendi studium vitetur* ('Books and letters by some learned and judicious men, from which you can tell how easy it is to settle disputes in the matter of religion, if you avoid distorting the study of doctrines') and it is commonly known as *Syllabus*. The list pooled much of the material he had collected over the years,<sup>19</sup> but no longer featured Pucci's name. So what had happened? Why was Pucci's name (and letter) present among Jean Hotman's papers at the beginning of his work in 1593, but not mentioned in the results of the research? His name was not the only one that disappeared and his case was not the only one that suggested differences between the starting and arrival points of the work in question. We are still awaiting a comparative study of the material collected by Hotman (the four volumes of Hotman's papers kept in the Bibliothèque de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français in Paris, known as *Hotmanniana*)<sup>20</sup> and the final list he drew up in 1607 (the *Syllabus*). Without wishing to make any claim that the present work fills this gap, some considerations on the points of contact and divergence between the two may help to answer the questions about Pucci. The close connection between the two sets of materials is beyond question: the collection of private papers is an indispensable guide for understanding the reasoning behind the

18 *Sententiae Philippi Melanchthonis, Martini Buceri, Casparis Hedionis et aliorum in Germania theologorum de pace Ecclesiae.*

19 Posthumus Meyjes, "Jean Hotman's *Syllabus*," 179–185.

20 On the contents of these four volumes, containing more than 200 documents, mostly manuscript, relating to a period of time ranging from 1497 to 1620 and including letters, political and religious treatises, acts of Synods, royal edicts, and theological theses, see Posthumus Meyjes, "Autour d'une liste de Jean Hotman, in *La controverse religieuse (xvi<sup>e</sup>–xix<sup>e</sup> siècles)*," *Actes du 1er Colloque Jean Boisset. vi<sup>e</sup>me Colloque du Centre d'Histoire de la Réforme et du Protestantisme*, recueillis par M. Péronnet (Montpellier, Université Paul Valéry, 1980), 43–55, p. 48; and idem, "Jean Hotman's *Syllabus*," 184.

list that appeared in the early 1600s.<sup>21</sup> The focal point of both the *Syllabus* and *Hotmanniana* was undoubtedly France and it could not have been otherwise, as the spectacle of the dramatic religious struggles on French soil had triggered Hotman's thinking and work, and his cry of desperation was mainly directed at his homeland.<sup>22</sup> Both the *Syllabus* and Hotman's Parisian notes and papers are filled with the names of Séguier, Loyseleur de Villiers and de Serres, in addition to the better-known Duplessis Mornay, Gentillet and Bauduin, and pamphlets such as *Examen pacifique de la doctrine des Huguenots*, and *Advis et dessein nouveau sur le fait de la religion* ('Pacific examination of the doctrine of the Huguenots').

While most of the works included in both documents are either in French or closely connected to the French situation, others have little to do with France. The greatest differences between the *Syllabus* and its source material can be found in relation to this second group. In the first volume of *Hotmanniana*, Pucci's letter was accompanied by a small selection of titles which are clearly connected to Pucci's biographical and doctrinal profile. Although the names Girolamo Savonarola, the Spaniard Antonio del Corro, Jérôme Bolsec and Andrea Dudith seem to be far removed from each other both historically and in terms of context, there is a common denominator that links them, and Pucci: they were all subjected to some form of persecution by the religious authorities. The *Epistola di frate Hieronimo da Ferrara dell'ordine di frati predicatori a tutti gli electi di Dio et fideli christiani essendo persequitado per la vera fede (1497)*<sup>23</sup> (*Epistle from Brother Hieronimo of Ferrara of the order of the preaching friars to all the elect of God and faithful Christians who are persecuted because of their true faith*) was faithfully transcribed a few pages before the *Articoli proposti da Girolamo Bolseco a M. Giovanni Calvin, accioch'egli vi risponda cathegoricamente [sic]* ('*Articles proposed by Jerome Bolsec to John Calvin, in order that he answer them straight away*') (1562)<sup>24</sup> and the *Tabula operum Dei de Antonii Corrani hispalensis et Synopsis methodi sacrae theologiae*

<sup>21</sup> Posthumus Meyjes, "Jean Hotman's *Syllabus*," 182.

<sup>22</sup> Idem, "Autour d'une liste de Jean Hotman," 49.

<sup>23</sup> This is the well-known *Lettera a tutti gli eletti di Dio e fedeli cristiani*, Florence, May 8, 1497, on which see G. Savonarola, *Lettere*, eds. R. Ridolfi, V. Romano, A.F. Verde, and idem, *Scritti apologetici*, eds. V. Romano, A.F. Verde (Rome, Angelo Belardetti, 1984), 256–264.

<sup>24</sup> These are the "Articles proposés par Jérôme Bolsec à Maître Jean Calvin, afin qu'il lui réponde catégoriquement et sans raisons humaines ne vaines similitudes, mais simplement par la parole de Dieu". On this collection of essays organized by Bolsec in 1553 (the date 1562 which appears next to the title in Hotman's collection may refer to the copy translated into Italian consulted by Hotman), see B. Cottret, *Calvin. A Biography* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000; first French edition 1995), 210.

(‘Table of God’s work made by the Spaniard Antonio del Corro, and Synopsis of the method of sacred theology’) (1569).<sup>25</sup> These documents were filed in Hotman’s papers along with a long letter from Bishop Dudith Sbardellati to his friend Celio Secondo Curione, dated 1556, which contained a heartfelt appeal to Emperor Maximilian II.<sup>26</sup> In what way were these texts and names related to Francesco Pucci? There is no need to dwell on Pucci’s debt to Savonarola,<sup>27</sup> except to stress that the passionate exaltations in Savonarola’s epistle transcribed by Hotman—which were intended to comfort and glorify those who had undergone persecution, convincing them not “to believe that because of these tribulations we have been abandoned by God”, but instead “that we are children elected to eternal glory prepared in Heaven for all those who for His sake will suffer persecution”<sup>28</sup>—appear to be in perfect harmony with Pucci’s frequently expressed belief that he had been unjustly punished because he was the depository of divine truths that were difficult or inconvenient for the majority of people to accept: the fervent appeal to “God’s Tribunal” to

<sup>25</sup> On Del Corro’s *Tableau de l’Oeuvre de Dieu*, printed on July 15, 1569 by a Flemish refugee in Norwich, see P.J. Hauben, *Three Spanish Heretics and the Reformation. Antonio Del Corro – Cassiodoro De Reina – Cypriano De Valera* (Geneva, Droz, 1967), 46–54; L. Firpo, “La chiesa italiana di Londra nel Cinquecento e i suoi rapporti con Ginevra,” now in idem, *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia* (Naples, Prismi, 1996), 117–194; but see also C. Gilly, “Sebastiano Castellione, l’idea di tolleranza e l’opposizione alla politica di Filippo II,” *Rivista storica italiana* 110 (1998), 144–165.

<sup>26</sup> The first document is the *Andreae Duditij epistola ad Curionem in qua consilium suum scribet iurisprudentiam discere; Andreae Duditij excusatio ad Ser.sum Romanum Imperatorem Maximilianum II, Germaniae, Hungariae, Bohemiae regem et in qua rationes affert quamobrem episcopatu quinque ecclesiensi et aliis honoribus abdicatis uxorem duxerit*. It is the letter sent from Paris on August 25, 1556; see A. Dudith, *Epistulae*, eds. L. Szczucki and T. Szepessy, 1, 1554–1567 (Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992), 55–60, the only extant copy of which is in Paris; on this letter, see J. Moreau-Reibel, “Zwierzenia mlodego Andrzeja Dudycza,” *Reformacja w Polsce* 9–10 (1937–1939), 439–441. The second document quoted by Hotman is to be identified with a long letter sent by Dudith to the Emperor Maximilian II after his wedding celebrated on June 1, 1567. The title given by Hotman in his *Syllabus* follows one given to the letter by its first seventeenth-century publisher: “Excusatio ad Maximil. II Imp. De Episcopatu ac honoribus abdictis Anno LXVI”; Quirinus Reuter, *Andreae Duditii de Horehowiza quondam episcopi Quinque-ecclesiensis [...] orationes* (Offenbach, Conrad Neben, 1610), 32–51. The letter is now published in Dudithius, *Epistulae*, 1, 444–459. On this document, see Almasi, *The Uses of Humanism. Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584) and Andreas Dudith (1533–1589), and the Republic of Letters in East Central Europe* (Leiden, Brill, 2009), 292–296.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *supra*, ch. I.

<sup>28</sup> Savonarola, *Lettera a tutti gli eletti di Dio*, 261.

denounce the persecution suffered by Cardinal du Perron and his entourage was yet another testimony of this profound conviction. Jérôme Bolsec, a French Carmelite friar who converted to Protestantism and was an exile in Ferrara under the protection of Renée de France, had been one of the main opponents of Calvin and his doctrine on predestination. The clash with the latter in the early 1550s led to his arrest and expulsion from Geneva, earning him the scorn of all the Protestant Churches, where he had initially hoped to be welcomed. He continued his wanderings after being expelled from Lausanne too at the behest of Beza in 1563, but eventually decided to return to the bosom of the Church of Rome (1570) and pay the two Reformers back for their hostility by compiling two largely unfavourable biographies.<sup>29</sup> If it is true that Pucci never explicitly referred to Bolsec and his changing fortunes, it is sufficient to mention the relationship that connected the former Carmelite monk to two figures who were themselves closely linked to Pucci—the Lutheran Samuel Huber<sup>30</sup> and the heretic Giorgio Siculo<sup>31</sup>—in order to realize that we are dealing with an intellectual profile that is in many ways similar to his. Pucci forged a strong bond with Antonio del Corro during his stay in London, perfecting his personal doctrines through the Spaniard's writings and teachings; del Corro was a Hieronymite monk from Seville who fled Spain in 1557 to avoid being tried by the Inquisition, became a Calvinist convert and was once again forced to flee, the second time from Geneva.<sup>32</sup> Finally, there was the humanist and diplomat Andrea Dudith, the Bishop of Knin (Dalmatia) from 1560 onwards, who played a leading role in the final stages of the Council of Trent on behalf of Ferdinand I and was later Maximilian II's Imperial Ambassador in Poland in 1565. His stand on religion was unclear and at times impossible to under-

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<sup>29</sup> On Bolsec and his dispute with Calvin, see the monumental work by P.C. Holtrop, *The Bolsec Controversy on Predestination from 1551 to 1555: the Statements of Jerome Bolsec and the Responses of John Calvin, Theodore Beza and the other Reformed Theologians* (Lewiston, E. Mellem Press, 1993).

<sup>30</sup> At the beginning of the 1590s Samuel Huber joined Pucci in a vigorous battle against the Reformed doctrine of predestination, defending instead the idea of the universal salvation of humankind. On the relationship between the two men, see Biagioni, "Incontri italo-svizzeri"; for Huber's reference to Bolsec's theses see *idem*, "Introduzione" to Pucci, *De Predestinatione*, 17. Cf. also *infra* ch. vi.

<sup>31</sup> On Giorgio Siculo, a Benedictine monk put on trial and condemned to death by the Inquisition of Ferrara in 1551, just when the French Bolsec was defending his doctrines before the Genevan court, and on his relationship with Pucci, cf. *supra*, ch. i.

<sup>32</sup> One of the charges advanced against Del Corro during his dispute with the consistory of the French Church in London was exactly that of having been Pucci's teacher; see *supra*, ch. i.

stand: he was associated with Cardinal Reginald Pole and the Archbishop of Ragusa, Ludovico Beccadelli, and had close links with the *Ecclesia Minor* and the Polish Antitrinitarians after his apostasy, until he took a leading representative of a well-known Polish Calvinist family as his second wife and eventually moved to Breslau, where he became a Lutheran convert. Dudith never felt he fully belonged to any of the institutional Churches and categorically refused to stoop to compromises regarding any religious matter, confessing to Giacomo Paleologo in 1573: "I am in favour of a blend of ceremonies and opinions, a certain form of Lutheranism and a strange Papism, I leave the practice (*usum*) of religion to the people and reserve my opinion to myself".<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, he always maintained that it was necessary to have a visible Church to act as a guide and point of reference in religious matters. He was an *ante litteram* sceptic who believed in every individual's freedom of conscience, which coincided with individual freedom of worship in his case. At the same time, however, he was a man who did not disdain institutions and indeed praised them because of their essential function; he was in favour of what has been called an "institutionally uncontrolled Christian life".<sup>34</sup> It was therefore natural for such a person to interact with others who could not be classified as part of the constituted church, such as Celio Secondo Curione, the celebrated author of *De amplitudine regni Dei* and addressee of the first of the two letters kept by

33 "Hic intersum ceremoniis et concionibus hermaphroditicis et un certo recipe di lutheranismo e papismo mirabile, basta usum populo permitto, come dice colui, scientiam mihi reservo". The letter went on like this: "Such a variety of opinions on Christianity shown by all these sects offends me. If the truth is one, why so much controversy? Where can I find it in the Scriptures? How will I be able to distinguish it in such a variety of interpretations? Everyone wants it for himself. I know very well what answer has been given to these questions, but these are things that are used for each part, they are common-places" ("Me ofende l'animo tanta varietà d'openioni nel cristianesimo, in tutte le sette. Se la verità è una, perché tante contrarietà, ubi est igitur nella Scrittura? Come l'intenderò in tanta varietate interpretum? Ognuno la vuole per sé. So ben quel che si risponde a questo, ma sono cose che servono ad ogni parte, sono luoghi comuni, etc."); letter, December 31, 1576; Dudithius, *Epistulae*, cit., pars v, 1576, ed. by U. Bathory, *commentarii instruxit* H. Kowalska, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2005, p. 306; quoted in G. Almási, "Andreas Dudith (1533–1589). Conflicts and Strategies of a Religious Individualist in Confessionalising Europe," in *Between Scylla and Charybdis. Learned Letter Writers Navigating the Reefs of Religious and Political Controversy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. De Landtsheer and H. Nellen (Leiden, Brill, 2011).

34 Almási, "Andreas Dudith." Almási is convinced that the category of Nicodemism does not exhaust the complexity and richness of Dudith's religious thought: he thus provides an interpretation different from that of L. Szczuski, "Between Orthodoxy and Nicodemism. Andrea Dudith at the Council of Trent," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 29 (1984), 49–90.

Hotman in his library. Andrea Dudith may have met Pucci in Krakow, where they both stayed between 1583 and 1585, but in any case, from the late 1570s onwards he always kept up-to-date with developments in the dispute between Pucci and Fausto Sozzini.<sup>35</sup> After their probable meeting, he established a system of direct contact with Pucci, revealing a sincere interest thinly veiled by a paternalistic sense of protectiveness.<sup>36</sup>

The four men in question therefore had similar characters and comparable individual fortunes to those of Francesco Pucci. Out of these four, or five if we include Pucci, why was the Italo-Hungarian diplomat the only one mentioned (albeit, as we are about to see, with a significant modification) in the 1607 *Syllabus*? We can start by stating that none of the names commonly cited as originators of the idea of tolerance in the sixteenth century—Schwenckfeld, Franck, Castellio and Coornhert—appear on Hotman's list. Indeed, Anabaptists, Libertines, Spiritualists and Socinians are all excluded. The reason for this is quite simple: Hotman's point of view was strongly institutional and he only seems to have been interested in irenicist writings by authors who belonged to or had dealings with the constituted Churches, whether Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran or Anglican. The privileged recipients of his list were men of power (both ecclesiastics and laymen) and church institutions; he addressed them in the hope of receiving a decisive contribution to support the reasons for peace. Free and heterodox thinkers—expelled and

35 On Sozzini's frequent reference in his long drawn out correspondence with Dudith to his dispute in Basel against Pucci, see Firpo, *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia, ad indicem*.

36 "Est in eorum contubernio aut certe ipsis notus Anglis, qui cum Dee versantur, Franciscus Puccius nobilis et patricius Florentinus. Ad eum scribo. Rogo, ut ei inclusas hic litteras certo reddi cures et responsum expetas" (letter of Dudith to Tadeus Hajek, Goudae, December 20, 1585; Bremen, Universitätsbibliothek, A 13, c. 122r). A year and a half later, Dudith still seemed to be following the Pucci saga and expressed concern for the relationship established by his Florentine friend with John Dee and Edward Kelley, fearing that the two might persuade him to return to Italy, as in fact happened, something that he considered very dangerous for Pucci: "De Anglis multa audivi. Illud unum mihi et stupendum videtur et parum credibile, quod aliqui certo affirmant eos colloquia cum angelis nescio quibus miscere. Sed si chrysopaeam adamarunt, ut scribis, puto atros esse illos genios, qui pro thesauris carbones illis dabunt, quin etiam carbones ipsos absument et cineres relinquunt. Puccium, credo, in Italia (si se totum credidit iis, ad quos malo consilio reversus est) Molocho sacrificabunt inquisitores. Sed non possum satis intelligere, quomodo cum illis ei convenire possit, cum exspectet testes illos Apocalypticos, de quibus rebus omnibus plura libere tecum more meo agenda essent" (Dudith to Hajek, Gorcae, June 3, 1587; Bremen, Universitätsbibliothek, A 13, c. 134r). The two letters are briefly mentioned by Biagioni, "Introduzione," to Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, 5; I'd like to thank my friend and colleague Gabor Almási for providing me with a copy of these documents.

feared by all the constituted Churches—could not help his cause in any way.<sup>37</sup> The purpose of the *Syllabus* was therefore extremely specific: to remind influential men of the Church and State of the works of those who had argued in favour of religious reconciliation in different ways by acting within the framework of the institutions. For example, the list featured works published in the climate of religious pacification that accompanied the first attempts to summon a council in the 1530s and works that recalled the efforts made in the 1530s and 1540s to reach doctrinal agreement between Catholics and Protestants in Mantua and Regensburg. Even a careful selection of acts from the Council of Trent served the purpose.<sup>38</sup> There was also the text of the celebrated *Concilium de emendanda Ecclesia*, ('Council on the amendment of the Church') produced by the Commission of Cardinals appointed by Paul III in 1536 to promote a reform of the Church of Rome. It was the last act in the desire for reconciliation with the Protestant world, supported by figures with little in common such as Reginald Pole and Gian Pietro Carafa. While the Roman Curia consigned it to immediate oblivion, the Lutherans were quick to use it as anti-Roman propaganda.<sup>39</sup> In this way, texts such as *Concilium de emendanda Ecclesia*, the Council of Mantua and the Regensburg colloquies—never cited in Hotman's private papers—replaced works by the less institutional Pucci, Savonarola, Bolsec and del Corro on the final list. Between 1593, when Hotman began to collect his papers, and 1607, when he finally decided to publish the *Syllabus*, there were considerable changes in thinking, positions, demands and strategic objectives. In the early 1590s, Hotman's sensibility was probably struck by the common denominator of suffering persecution, the profound anxiety that was a characteristic feature of these exiles *religionis causa* and their status as men of faith standing against any form of rigid institutional constriction. However, the same factors now made them unfit for the objectives he had gradually defined over the years. Between these two dates—1593 and 1607, an interval of

37 Posthumus Meyjes, "Jean Hotman's *Syllabus*," 191.

38 *Acta prioris colloqui in comitiis imperii Ratisbonae habiti: hoc est, articuli de religione conciliati et non conciliati omnes, ut ab imperatore ordinibus imperii ad iudicandum et deliberandum propositi sunt, Argentorati, 1541; Disputata Ratisbonae in altero colloquio 1546 maxime de iustificatione. Item, tractata et decreta de concilianda religione in comitiis ratisbonensi 1541, Spirensi anno 44, Wormatiensi anno 45, et Augustano anno 48, in 4. 1548; Articuli qui debuerant in concilio apud Mantuam, vel ubicunque futurum esset, exhiberi nomine nostrae partis: et quid nos recipere vel concedere possimus vel non possimus. Scriptum Lutheri nunquam editum; Actes et memoires du concile de Trente des années 1562 et 63, pour montrer que le roys de France deslors ont requis une reformation de la liturgie de l'Eglise. 1607.*

39 *Consilium delectorum cardinalium de emendanda Ecclesia, Pauli III iussu conscriptum anno 1538. Accessit aequitatis discussio super dicto consilio, ad tollendam inter Germanos in religione discordiam, 1539.*

nearly fifteen years—the historical context changed radically. The tormented solution of Henry IV's conversion, the Edict of Nantes in 1598 and the end of the long period of French civil wars offered Hotman a very different perspective from that of a few years before. After Nantes, the battle for summoning a National Council of the Gallican Church proceeded in a different direction. It was no longer a question of protesting against persecution suffered by one or the other side, defending men who had been exiled or condemned for religious reasons by the constituted authorities. The institutional framework of the Kingdom of France now appeared to be stable and well-defined; it needed to be changed on the inside.

Why then was Dudith Sbardellati's name kept in the *Syllabus*? His basic religious standpoint was actually very close to that of men like Pucci or del Corro; along with many other heterodox thinkers, all three shared an intolerance towards external constraints and an aversion to the subtleties of theological disputes which reduced the message of the Gospels to an arid postulate, as well as a defence of freedom of conscience. Why did Hotman think that Andrea Dudith deserved to be classed alongside Cassander and Bauduin, while Pucci and del Corro were omitted? While the latter two supported corrosive anti-predestinarian criticism and, more generally, a radical undermining of the constituted authority of the Reformed Churches, Dudith always defended the need for an institutional Church of reference, though he stressed that men should be able to enjoy absolute liberty within that Church. While Pucci and del Corro, like Bolsec, defended the 'Pelagian' concept that every man can achieve eternal salvation so long as he trusts in God—alluding to the salvation that anyone, even a Jew or a Turk, could obtain outside a visible church structure—Dudith always remained within the Reformed Church after his apostasy from Catholicism (he died a Lutheran in Breslau), although he was strongly attracted by Antitrinitarian doctrines. He made a point of defending each individual's religious freedom, but was always careful not to take up any explicit polemical position against the main dogmas of Protestant (or Catholic) doctrine.

It is likely that Hotman continued to seek information about the men and works he had initially filed among his private papers and that he perfected his selection over the course of time as he gradually extended his knowledge of their bibliographical fortunes and doctrines. With regard to Francesco Pucci, for example, it was probably only at a later stage, after receiving and then transcribing the letter from Pucci among his papers, that Hotman became aware of the severe judgement that the censors of the Faculty of Theology in Basle (Simon Sulzer, Ulrich Koch and Johann Jakob Grynæus) had pronounced against Pucci at the end of March 1578. They stated that the theses he had

presented in a public discussion were “organized and proposed not only against our Church, but also against all Reformed Churches and even the Church of Rome, in a way that all the teaching of the Apostles, together with that of the Bible, is subverted.”<sup>40</sup> He may also have been warned about Pucci’s doctrines by his friend François du Jon,<sup>41</sup> who had just written a biting controversialist pamphlet to demolish the main statements contained in a short work recently published by Pucci: *Catholicae doctrinae de natura hominis iacentis in peccato [...] Collatio cum doctrina nova libelli cuius inscriptio De Christi servatoris efficacitate* (1592). (“Catholic doctrine about the nature of man who lives in sin, in combination with the new doctrine of the booklet entitled About the Efficacy of Christ the Saviour”).<sup>42</sup> Pucci was clearly incompatible with du Jon and his well-known treatise *De Eireinicon* (which was also translated into French with the title *Le paisible chretien*), which Hotman immediately added to his *Syllabus*, and they did not remain on the same list for long. Hotman might have learnt more about Antonio del Corro in a similar way, modifying his opinion as the years went by: the fact that the Spanish Hieronymite’s *Tableau de l’oeuvre de Dieu* presented totally analogous doctrines to those of the feared Florentine,<sup>43</sup> or that some of the Spaniard’s works were mere re-workings of writings by the Savoyard Sebastian Castellio which openly exalted freedom of conscience.<sup>44</sup>

40 The three judges went on with these words: “Thus, original sin would be completely abolished and all unbelievers such as Jews, Turks, without any distinction, would reach the bliss, outstandingly with no sermon or sacrament” (“Allora il peccato originale sarebbe completamente abolito e tutti gli uomini miscredenti indistintamente, come i giudei, i turchi, in modo stupefacente, senza alcuna predica o sacramento, raggiungerebbero la beatitudine”); cf. Rotondò, “Nuove testimonianze sul soggiorno di Francesco Pucci a Basilea,” in *Studi e ricerche*, 1, Istituto di Storia, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, (Università degli Studi di Firenze, 1981), 277; now also in *idem, Studi di storia eretica del Cinquecento*, 2 vols. (Florence, Olschki, 2008), 2, 617–633.

41 On the relationship between Du Jon and Hotman, see the testimony offered by Hotman himself in a letter addressed to Beza, written on May 1, 1593: “In this my opinion on the peace of the Church I agree with great men like Duplessis Mornay, Loyseleur de Villiers, Baron, Du Jon, [...] whom I had the chance to meet and listen to”; see C. Vivanti, *Lotta politica*, p. 227 (the translation is mine).

42 On this work, cf. *infra*, ch. vi.

43 On the *Tableau*’s consonance with Pucci’s doctrines, in addition to A. Rotondò, “Il primo soggiorno,” and Biagioli, “Universalismo,” 347, see *supra*, ch. 1.

44 Is the case, for example, of the *Lettre envoyée à la Maiesté du Roy des Espaignes*, published by Del Corro in 1567, which contained a successful reworking of Castellio’s *Conseil à la France désolée*, adapted for the occasion to the situation in the Netherlands, but also glorifying freedom of conscience as the only solution to end the religious conflict, cf. C. Gilly, “Sebastiano Castellione, l’idea di tolleranza,” 156–157. On the Latin version of this

In any case, the years of study before the publication of the *Syllabus* also led Jean Hotman to make a significant correction regarding Dudith: instead of the letter to Curione from 1556 (and the appeal to Emperor Maximilian II) which he had transcribed in his private papers, he decided to include a letter addressed to the Reformation leader Théodore de Bèze in his 1607 list: “Epistola Andreae Duditii sacrae caesareae maiestatis consiliarii ad Theodorum Bezam [...] in qua disputatur, an Ecclesiae nomen vel soli romanae vel soli reformatae conveniat. Basileae 8. 1593, et alibi frequenter in Germania et Polonia.” (“Letter from Andrea Dudith, counsellor of his Sacred Imperial Majesty, to Theodore de Bèze, [...] in which it is discussed whether it is better to use only the name Reformed or only the name Catholic for the name of the Church”). This is the well-known letter on the question of religious freedom sent from Krakow on 1 August 1570,<sup>45</sup> which Hotman probably consulted in one of the sixteenth-century printed versions.<sup>46</sup> It was first published in Basle (the printing location indicated by Hotman) in 1577 in the appendix of a reprint of the well-known pamphlet by Mino Celsi *De haereticis coercendis quatenus progedi liceat*. It was republished in 1584, again in Basle, and finally for a third time in Heidelberg in 1593 with a title (“Epistola in qua disputatur an Ecclesiae nomen vel soli romanae vel soli reformatae conveniat”) that closely recalls the words used by Hotman to classify the missive in his *Syllabus*: “*An Ecclesiae nomen soli reformatae conveniat*”.<sup>47</sup> It was probably therefore this 1593 edition that attracted Hotman’s attention; he may have been intrigued by that expression, which so closely echoed the matters he had been debating with such passion.<sup>48</sup>

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work see now also I.J. García Pinilla, “Valor de la “Epistola ad potentissimum Philippum Austriacum Regem” de Antonio del Corro,” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 70 (2008), 595–607.

45 Dudith to Théodore de Bèze, Cracow, August 1, 1570, in A. Dudithius, *Epistulae*, pars 2, 1568–1573 (Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1995), 158–182. An Italian translation of the final part of the letter is in M. Firpo, *Il problema della tolleranza religiosa nell’età moderna* (Turin, Loescher, 1978), 132–133.

46 See the list of Dudith’s letters published in the last decades of the sixteenth century, made by his first twentieth-century biographer, Pierre Costil, *André Dudith humaniste hongrois 1533–1589. Sa vie, son oeuvre et ses manuscrits grecs*, (Paris, Société d’Edition ‘Les Belles Lettres’, 1935), 6–11.

47 The letter had a fourth and final edition in *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*, 1, pp. 516 ff; cf. Costil, *André Dudith*, 7–8.

48 The reference is to the discussion Hotman had with many Lutherans or Calvinists who did not want to give up the claim to be exclusive representatives of the *Ecclesia catholica*, claim that the Roman Catholics repaid with the charge of heresy. For a discussion of this issue, see Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome ni Genève*; Posthumus Mayes, “Protestant Irenicism in

This would also explain the error in the indication of the year as 1593, which refers to the (third) publication of the missive and not the year when it was written (1570), whereas his indication of Basle as the place of publication should have referred to the first two editions of the letter and not the third. Why did Hotman replace one document with another? Why did he remove the letter to Curione that he had initially considered and include a letter written some years later instead? When the 1556 missive was written—before he became bishop—Dudith had already distanced himself from the Church of Rome in his heart, wishing to leave the land of his relations in Verona. Though he did not refrain from expressing his longing for religious freedom, he stressed the difficulty of identifying with the forms and institutions of the papal Church.<sup>49</sup> The long letter to Bèze—written in 1570 on the crest of a wave of emotion following the harsh repression of the Swiss churches, which had reached its climax a few years before with the beheading of the Antitrinitarian heretic Valentino Gentile in Berne—consisted entirely of a passionate appeal for freedom of conscience and the free interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. Above all, although the letter did not forgo an institutional perspective, it focused on a subject that was particularly dear to Hotman: the idea that the process of confessionalization experienced in Europe as a reaction to the Reformation had failed completely. Indeed, Dudith wrote that it had not helped to bring the path of Christ closer to men in any way.<sup>50</sup> Confessionalization and irenicism were two phenomena that were both parallel and opposed, as irenicists like Hotman had conducted their battles around the division into separate Churches, a characteristic feature of the process of confessionalization. They denied that this separation was a necessary step and questioned the legitimacy of the resulting confessional polemics. However, even in its most radical form, the criticism of this process triggered by the Reformation never involved

the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in D. Loades, ed., *The End of Strife* (Edinburgh, 1984), 79–80; and M. Venard, "Une Église, deux Églises, pas d'Église? Le cas français," in *La Réforme en France et en Italie. Contacts, comparaisons et contrastes*, études réunies par P. Benedict, S. Seidel Menchi et A. Tallon (Rome, École française de Rome, 2007), 595–634.

49 "Non habeo, qua ratione cum illis vivere possim, qui veram Christi religionem profitentur, a quibus ego in fide confirmari et quorum exemplis ad vitam pie sancteque degendam invitari possim [...] Ego illis [il riferimento è ai parenti veronesi] [...] cum animo et religione sim remotissimus, locorum quoque intervallo longissime ab illis disiunctus esse cupio"; letter to Celio Secondo Curione, *ibid.*, 55–60; see also D. Caccamo, *Eretici italiani in Moravia, Polonia, Transilvania 1558–1611* (Florence, Le Lettere, 1999; first edition, 1970), 112–113.

50 For a first analysis of the letter, see Almási's considerations ("Andrea Dudith"). For my own view on irenicism and confessionalization see also *infra*.

rejection of the Reformed institutional Churches or a desire to return to the pre-Reformation *status quo*. They did naturally admonish the great reformers for going much further than their original intention of straightening out Rome's deviations: instead of reforming the Catholic Church in keeping with the model of the primitive apostolic community, Luther, Calvin and their followers had attempted to construct a completely new edifice. Therefore, they had not reformed, but transformed, demolishing the existing edifice to build new one, instead of repairing it.<sup>51</sup> The representatives of the new Lutheran, Anglican and Calvinist institutional Churches had always felt an integral part of an *Ecclesia catholica*; the problem was that while the Papists accused them of heresy, many of them claimed to be the only true defenders of its original values.<sup>52</sup> On the basis of this diagnosis, Hotman and his friends pursued an ecumenical ideal of a single universal Church that would operate worldwide as an amalgam of national Churches. The latter would show that they belonged to the former by respecting the dogmas and ecclesiastical structures that would be created, following the model of the primitive Church, but they would also enjoy considerable freedom in terms of customs, rites and language, so that the different national traditions could be given their due importance.<sup>53</sup> Dudith's call for a form of freedom of conscience that did not forgo an institutional perspective was extremely useful for the framework that Hotman was outlining.

### 3 Irenicism or Tolerance?

The Dutch historian Hans Posthumus Meyjes recently used the term *irénisme étatique* ('State irenicism') to define the group of irenicists for whom the *Syllabus* serves as a sort of index.<sup>54</sup> For these men, both the State and public authority were concepts that were just as important as the Church. The ecclesiastical policies followed by Hotman, in the wake of Erasmus, Cassander and Bauduin, but also the French *politiques*, required the civil authorities to organize religious assemblies where doctrinal divergences could be discussed openly and where representatives of the two opposing parties could work out

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<sup>51</sup> Posthumus Meyjes, "Protestant irenicism," 79.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>54</sup> Posthumus Meyjes, "Tolérance et irénisme," in *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic*, ed. C. Berkvens-Stevelinck, J. Israel and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (Leiden, New York, Cologne, Brill, 1997), 63–73: 69–73.

joint measures of reform.<sup>55</sup> Their vision was based on the conviction that the separation within the Church and the *res publica christiana* was an anomaly and a scandal caused by the religious confessions. The guilty parties were the men who controlled their fortunes and the theologians who supported them with their doctrinal reflections. This is why they pinned their hopes above all on political power; they had developed an Erastian concept of the relationship between State and Church, whereby only a strong political power, of either aristocratic or monarchic-aristocratic origin, would be able to achieve the peace and unity that the *Ecclesia catholica* needed. Pucci followed a different path compared to the religious and political horizons of the 'State irenicists'. When examining the profile of some of Hotman's contemporaries such as Serrarius, Zwicker and Comenius outlined by Posthumus Meyjes, in which he defines the characteristic features of a group of irenicists that he calls *utopique*, it is clear that they are more compatible with Pucci. According to Meyjes, these men shared "a marked individualism and a strong anti-institutional tendency. They consider religion to be first of all a private matter, a matter of the heart which they know is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and as well as knowing this, they want it to be so. In other words, they are 'enthusiasts' who, as such, perpetuate the tradition of sixteenth-century Spiritualists. Indeed, like the latter, they criticize the way in which the Church—since the conversion of Emperor Constantine—has progressively become an instrument of coercion, as the official theologians swept away all spiritual inspiration and blocked true piety with their dogmatic systems and scholastic subtleties. [...] Their pacifist ideal was to a large extent fuelled by their belief that the end of the world was nigh and that it was necessary to prepare for the return of Christ and the advent of His millenary reign. The certainty of living in eschatological times and therefore the expectation of the imminent fulfilment of St Paul's prophecy 'All Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11:26) explains why these irenicists were so open-minded in their approach to the fate and fortunes of the Jews. And while they followed unorthodox paths in theological matters, equally in philosophical matters they tended to be inspired by the 'irregular' doctrines of Pansophism and alchemical speculation."<sup>56</sup> Posthumus Meyjes thus coined the term *irénisme utopique* for all those fitting this definition. Pucci perfectly matches this definition.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, all the main aspects of his thinking and life story are reflected in this

55 *Ibid.*, 72.

56 Posthumus Meyjes, "Tolérance et irénisme," 66 (my translation from French).

57 Posthumus Meyjes also introduced a third category which he defines with the term *irénisme confessionnel*, in which he includes the Calvinist David Paraeus, the Lutheran Georg Calixtus as well as some figures among Dutch Arminians, who sought to overcome

profile: his deep-rooted conviction that he was a *theodidactus* directly inspired by the Holy Spirit, the clear anti-institutional implications of his doctrine on the amplitude of divine mercy and salvation for all mankind, his biting criticism of the subtleties of scholars and theologians, his frequent allusions to Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nicea, his inspired millenarianism and deeply felt exaltations for the Jews to convert in view of Christ coming to Earth and even his obsession with alchemy, which he chanced upon by associating with John Dee and Edward Kelley.<sup>58</sup> The elements which had brought Jean Hotman and Francesco Pucci together in the early 1590s, or enabled them to converse a distance, were their conciliarist inspiration, their exaltation of the King of France and, above all, their joint invocation of an *Ecclesia catholica et christiana* consisting of “all those who know and recognize Jesus Christ as the maker of their salvation”. This distance, however, then expanded to such an extent that it could no longer be bridged. *Irénisme étatique* and *irénisme utopique* were travelling along parallel tracks that were destined never to meet, with their followers either clinging to the hope of influencing the development of ecclesiastical politics in the countries where they lived or too deeply absorbed in their inspired prophetism to notice the world that was changing around them. Once again, Hotman’s *Syllabus* registers this gaping hiatus. As the list was the manifesto of *irénisme étatique*, it could not fail to include the work that inspired the thinking of Hotman and his friends about ecclesiastical politics, Thomas Erastus’s *Theses de excommunicatione*. (‘Theses on excommunication’).<sup>59</sup> If we recall the scornful expression “that Florentine

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divisions and religious controversies focusing on the Apostles’ Creed as the common denominator of all confessions (cf. *ibid.*, p. 65).

58 It will therefore be among these irenicists and utopians that we shall have to look for traces of his legacy, fragments of thoughts collected or developed over decades or centuries to follow, all of which will provide a picture of Pucci different perhaps from that of the convinced controversialist passed down by testimonies from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the use of the term ‘puccianism’ in a polemical sense between the end of the sixteenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century see Biagioni, “Prospettive di ricerca su Francesco Pucci,” *Rivista storica italiana* 107 (1995), 133–152: 150–152.

59 *Tho. Erasti philosophi et Medici praestantissimi Theses de excommunicatione: in quibus de Synedrii Ecclesiastici auctoritate disputatur. Item, an sit delinquentibus Coenae Dominicæ usus interdicendus. Cum epistolis Bullingeri, Gualteri aliorumque Germaniae et Helvetiae theologorum in hoc argumento. Londini* 4 (cf. *Syllabus*). The work, published posthumously in London in 1589 by John Wolfe, demonstrated on the basis of Scripture that the sins of Christians should be punished by the civil authorities and not through the exclusion from the sacraments imposed by the clergy, noting in particular that the excommunication was

beast" ("bestia illa fiorentina") used by the Swiss theologian and physician a few years before to describe Pucci,<sup>60</sup> it is clear that the two names were unlikely to appear on the same list.

Posthumus Meyjes returned several times to the need to distinguish between the concepts of irenicism and tolerance, maintaining that the former should include all efforts to reconcile or overcome the tensions and divisions between religious confessions in a peaceful manner, while the latter had the wider meaning of accepting the presence of different opinions from one's own in religious matters, with options ranging from freedom of conscience to the complete freedom of an individual, including the freedom to be an atheist.<sup>61</sup> A few years previously, Mario Turchetti had suggested a similar distinction—between concord and tolerance—that provoked a lively historiographical debate. In his opinion, it was important to separate the concepts of concord, meaning harmony between the Churches, and tolerance, as the two terms indicated political positions that were destined to exclude each other. The first category included men like Erasmus, Bauduin, Cassander and Grotius,<sup>62</sup> all the *moyenneurs* who aimed to settle the doctrinal differences between the constituted Churches by means of a process of religious reconciliation or the use

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the prerogative of a civil magistrate. The original title of the work is *Explicatio gravissimae quaestiorum utrum excommunicatio, quatenus religionem intelligentes et amplexantes, a sacramentorum usu, proprier admissum facinus arcet, mandato natur divino, an excogitata sit ab hominibus*. For a first approach to Erasmus and erastianism see G. Migliorato, "Erasto ed erastianesimo. Problematica di un giurisdizionalismo confessionista," *Critica storica* 16 (1979), 185–223; but see now C.D. Gunnoe, Jr., *Thomas Erasmus and the Palatinate. A Renaissance Physician in the Second Reformation* (Leiden, Brill, 2010).

60 Having received a copy of the *thesis* that Pucci had printed in Frankfurt January 1st, 1578, inviting all "lovers of truth" to an open debate on the problem of the infinite amplitude of God's kingdom, Erasmus had vented all his anger in a letter to Grynæus, condemning Pucci's initiative with harsh words: "Metui iam pridem ne erumperet hoc ulcus et foetore suo foedaret ecclesiam"; A. Rotondó, "Nuove testimonianze," 287. On the long friendship between Erasmus and Dudith-Sbardellati, enriched by common scientific and astrological interests, cf. P. Costil, *André Dudith, ad indicem*.

61 Posthumus Meyjes, "Protestant irenicism," 78; idem, "Tolérance et irénisme," 65.

62 After the publication of the list in 1607 Hotman continued to collect new material and found in Grotius one of his most passionate supporters. It was the latter who in fact in 1628 helped him to publish an expanded edition of the *Syllabus* (*Syllabus aliquot synodorum et colloquiorum, quae auctoritate et mandato Caesarum et Regum, super negotio Religionis, ad controversias conciliandas, indicta sunt...*, Aureliae [but Strasbourg], 1628), and above all it was he who gave wide circulation to the first version of the list, posting it in the appendix to his *opera omnia*; cf. Posthumus Meyjes, "Jean Hotman's *Syllabus*," 187–189, and idem, "Jean Hotman and Hugo Grotius,"

of coercion, while the 'tolerant' category only included those who accepted the coexistence of two or more religions within a State as a stable (rather than a transitory) solution to the widespread intolerance of sixteenth-century society and the doctrinal conflicts that undermined its very existence. On the basis of this reductive interpretation of the term tolerant, Turchetti only included the author of *Conseil à la France désolée*—the humanist Sebastian Castellio—and a few others in this second group.<sup>63</sup> The provocative proposal attracted its fair share of criticism; an outline of this nature not only risked misrepresenting Castellio's thinking, but also, more importantly, omitted "the entire radical Reformation and all the spiritualist critics of the Churches that existed at the time."<sup>64</sup> However, the aspect of tolerance was not the only part of Turchetti's proposal to be contested. Though recognizing the usefulness of the proposed distinction, the historian Malcom C. Smith, for example, reflected on the need to define the term 'concord' more precisely, using it only for those who promoted religious unity and favoured a process of doctrinal conciliation (thus excluding the use of force).<sup>65</sup> The proposal made by Posthumus Meyjes avoided entering into the merits of this debate, but drew on the same

63 Cf. M. Turchetti, *Concordia o tolleranza? François Bauduin (1520–1573) e i "Moyenneurs"* (Geneva, Droz, 1984), but above all idem, "Religious Concord and Political Tolerance in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991), 15–25, and idem, "Une question mal posée: Erasme et la tolérance. L'idée de synkatabasis," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 53 (1991), 379–395. On Castellio's *Conseil à la France désolée* (1562), see H.R. Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio, 1515–1563. Humanist and Defender of Religious Toleration in a Confessional Age* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003; first German edition, 1997), 186–196.

64 Cf. Gilly, "Sebastiano Castellione," 147–151; as well as Rotondò, *Europe et Pays-Bas. Evolution, réélaboration et diffusion de la tolérance au XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Lignes d'un programme de recherches* (Florence, Università degli Studi, Dipartimento di Storia, 1992), 72 ff.

65 M.C. Smith, "Early French Advocates of Religious Freedom," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, XXV/1, 1994, 29–51, esp. p. 35 and footnote 13. Thierry Wanegffelen has intervened, albeit indirectly, in this debate, weaving the theme of tolerance with the one of irenicism but choosing to measure his work on the ground of "religious sensibility" rather than that of ecclesiology chosen by historians like Turchetti. Wanegffelen introduced in his book the term of "non-confessional" Catholics to indicate some 'augustinian' Catholics, such as Pierre L'Estoile or Gérard Roussel, confessor of Marguerite de Navarre, who was not concerned about the intensification of confessional strife, continuing to insist on the gratuitousness of salvation and at the same time expressing distrust of those who defended the merits of human works. To describe the attitude of those Catholics within the institution, Wanegffelen resurrected the term Nicodemism, convinced that Orthodoxy is a complex reality that can "accommodate diversity" (*Ni Rome ni Genève*, 479–481).

distinction put forward by Mario Turchetti and solved many of the problems pointed out. The concept of irenicism with its three subdivisions—*étatique*, *confessionnel* and *utopique*—cleared up any confusion that the term concord might cause, for example with regard to possible use of force to favour religious reconciliation. The re-establishment of the traditionally accepted meaning of the term ‘tolerance’ by great twentieth-century historians such as Joseph Lecler and Wilbur K. Jordan allowed the Dutch historian to include not only Sebastian Castellio in this category, but also figures like Caspar Schwenckfeld, Sébastien Franck and Dirk Coornhert, namely all the Libertines, Spiritualists and Socinians who favoured freedom of conscience.

One question remains at the end of this brief consideration: should someone like Francesco Pucci be considered an irenicist or a supporter of tolerance? Did promoting peace exclude the possibility of spreading a message of tolerance? It is true that Pucci’s profile is perfectly compatible with the definition of the *utopique* irenicist and that his appeals are all directed at religious reconciliation beneath one great roof, the *Ecclesia catholica universalis*. It is also true that he never invoked freedom of conscience or ever considered the possibility of accepting the existence of doctrinal positions that differed from his. However, his proposal also contains a strong universalistic element, of which the concept of tolerance appears to be a natural consequence; the idea that all men are destined to salvation because they are illuminated by natural faith in God makes Pucci one of the greatest supporters of the amplitude of the kingdom of God.<sup>66</sup> It was precisely this idea, as we shall see in the next chapter, which caused another French irenicist, François du Jon, to launch a polemical attack against him.

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66 Cf. lastly Biagioni, “Universalismo.”

## The Limits of the Kingdom of God

### 1 *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* (1592)

Francesco Pucci's *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* was published in Leiden in 1592 and is undoubtedly his best-known work. The way that it closely relates to the previously described events in France is clear from its very first lines. As stated in the dedicatory epistle to Pope Clement VIII, the work was conceived to "silence my most evil enemies and prepare Your Holiness and all the most equitable theologians to accept gratefully the things that the Lord has revealed to me."<sup>1</sup> Pucci addressed the new pontiff by expressing the joy and hope that his election had triggered: he felt that the day on which "a Florentine pope had been elected" had been "the brightest for Italy and above all for our homeland".<sup>2</sup> He turned to him following a suggestion by Henry IV ("the King judged it opportune for me to inform Your Holiness of the things that the Supreme Father revealed to me")<sup>3</sup> to redeem the humiliation suffered in Paris "in the month of February this year by a high-ranking prelate who shall not be named out of respect [Cardinal Charles de Bourbon]"<sup>4</sup> when he had debated the topic of the salvific effectiveness of the benefit of Christ with some "theologians and doctors of the Sorbonne". His opponents had tenaciously denied that "the salvific benefit of Christ is efficacious for individual men" and had invented "some sufficient grace which is not efficacious at all, except for those who receive special grace and baptism", concluding that as "numerous men are without it", in their opinion they "perish into eternity".<sup>5</sup> As Pucci felt that this thesis was simply untenable, even "unholy" ("empia"), much of the book is dedicated to demonstrating—on the basis of analysis of the Scriptures—that

<sup>1</sup> Dedicatory epistle to the Supreme Pontiff, Ter Gouw, dated July 1592, in Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 2–3; for the original Latin version of the letter, see Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 139–141.

<sup>2</sup> "Era stato creato un pontefice fiorentino"; "più radioso per l'Italia e particolarmente per la patria nostra"; Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Il Re giudicò opportuno che io comunicassi alla Santità Vostra le cose che mi aveva rivelato il Sommo Padre"; *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> "Nel mese di febbraio di quest'anno presso un altissimo prelato che non nominiamo per riguardo;" "teologi e dottori della Sorbona;" *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> "Che il beneficio salvifico di Cristo sia efficace per i singoli uomini;" "una qualche sufficienza per nulla efficace se non per chi riceva la grazia speciale e il battesimo"; "innumerevoli uomini ne sono privi"; "periscono in eterno;" *ibid.*, 7.

“Christ was ordained to be the efficacious Saviour of all and of each man”.<sup>6</sup> The battle that Pucci pursued was directed against all “lovers of the partisan spirit” that are “caught up and involved in love of themselves or other creatures”, preferring “certain lower forms of earthly goods to the supreme universal good that is God”.<sup>7</sup> He wrote against the many “sects and factions fighting with each other about holy matters and the cornerstones of the religion”, against all enemies of “common reason that enlightens individual men” and opponents of the “mercy of God that embraces every mortal”, against “the foolish credulity and blind imitation of shepherds and commentators”. He was therefore against all those that rejected “natural faith that is innate and inherent in all men”, the form of faith that man has from the maternal womb onwards and that is directed at the “God of heaven and earth, extremely radiant and highly worthy of faith and love”.<sup>8</sup> This point of view was closely connected to Pucci’s concept of original sin, namely that God judged Adam’s sin to be “atonable” (“espiabile”) and that the Scriptures demonstrate that “eternal ruin is not incumbent on anyone with regard to that sin” and clearly illustrate that “the blessed resurrection and the liberation from that mortality” set aside for humankind are “destined in an effective way for individual men” by God.<sup>9</sup> Pucci outlined a scenario in which the role of the sacraments was reduced almost to the point of irrelevance (“not simply a lack of them, but only contempt for them is a cause of ruin”)<sup>10</sup> and even knowledge of the Gospel was superfluous to purposes of the salvation of man: “The simple lack and ignorance of the Gospel and the lack of baptism [...] must not be confused with the incredulity or the lack of faith of those people who do not have faith in the ambassadors of God, who deserve supreme trust, and make themselves worthy of the most serious torment”. Only a conscious rejection of faith, which was only possible after achieving adulthood, constituted a deviation from the path of salvation mapped out by God: “There is no threat of eternal death incumbent on anyone, unless he has

6 “Cristo fu destinato a essere efficace Salvatore di tutti e di ciascuno degli uomini;” *ibid.*, 10.

7 “Amatori dello spirito di parte”; “presi e occupati dall’amore di sé o delle altre creature,” “beni inferiori e particolari al sommo e universale bene, che è Dio;” *ibid.*, 7.

8 “Sette e fazioni che si combattono tra loro sulle cose sacre e sui capisaldi della religione;” “ragione comune che illumina i singoli uomini;” “benevolenza di Dio che abbraccia qualunque mortale;” “sciocca credulità e la cieca imitazione dei pastori e degli interpreti;” “fede naturale e innata e insita in tutti gli uomini;” “Dio del cielo e della terra, oggetto luminosissimo e degnissimo di fede e di amore;” *ibid.*, 6.

9 “Rispetto a quel peccato non incombe su nessuno l’eterna rovina;” “la beata resurrezione e la liberazione da quella mortalità;” “destinate in modo efficace ai singoli uomini;” *ibid.*, 11.

10 “Non la loro semplice mancanza ma solamente il loro dispregio è causa di rovina”; *ibid.*, 65.

made bad use of reason".<sup>11</sup> As Pucci had already illustrated on several occasions, education could help man to follow or deviate from the path of salvation. In the pages of *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, he distinguished between "prevenient grace" ("grazia antecedente"), which "precedes and embraces the figures of individuals" and "illuminates each person in a salvific way like the sun", and "habitual grace" ("grazia abituale"), which instead varies in men in many ways, "depending on whether someone is educated or not in the Church of God, or whether he is inclined and well disposed towards the divine deity and is constant in his good habits or not".<sup>12</sup> His work also inevitably included the other themes that we have come to recognize as the distinctive elements of his doctrinal proposal. As he told the Pope in his dedicatory letter, his intention was to "confute heretics and take away the disciples that they have deceived in an unhealthy way" and "lead Jews and Pagans back to Christ". Some parts of the work therefore reiterated the anti-predestinarian issues he had already expressed at length in his manuscript work *De predestinatione*, while others were dedicated to the proclamation of the conversion of the "Jews" ("Giudei") with a view to the forthcoming arrival of God on earth and the holy Council that would end all religious discord: "God the supreme father [...] will shortly come to pass judgement, with his Council or Consistory of pure senators, and during the session of this Council the whole controversy between Christian and non-Christian nations will be renewed".<sup>13</sup> At this point, added Pucci, "the Jews and the other nations will meet together with the Christians in a single religion and in a single Church".<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "La semplice mancanza e non conoscenza del Vangelo e la mancanza del battesimo [...] non devono essere confuse con l'incredulità o con la mancanza di fede di coloro che non hanno fiducia negli ambasciatori di Dio, degnissimi di somma fiducia, e si rendono meritevoli del supplizio più grave"; "Nessun pericolo di morte eterna incombe su qualcuno, se non dopo che abbia fatto cattivo uso della ragione"; *ibid.*, 26.

<sup>12</sup> "Antecede e abbraccia le persone dei singoli"; "come il sole illumina salvificamente i singoli individui"; "a seconda che qualcuno venga educato o non venga educato nella Chiesa di Dio, sia propenso e ben disposto verso il nume divino, sia costante nel buon abito, o no"; *ibid.*, 62.

<sup>13</sup> "Confutare gli Eretici e sottrarre loro i discepoli che essi hanno ingannato in modo insano"; "ricondurre Ebrei e Pagani a Cristo"; "Dio sommo padre [...] tra poco verrà per tenere giudizio, con quel suo concilio o concistoro di candidi senatori, durante la seduta del quale verrà rinnovata tutta la controversia fra le nazioni cristiane e anticristiane"; *ibid.*, 74.

<sup>14</sup> "I Giudei e le altre nazioni si riuniranno insieme con i Cristiani in un'unica religione e in una sola Chiesa"; *ibid.*, 80.

## 2      Francesco Pucci and François du Jon: Conflicting Irenicism

*De Christi servatoris efficacitate* was a compendium of two lengthy unpublished works (*De praedestinatione Dei* and *De regno Christi*) written in Prague at the end of the decade, the product of twenty years of theological meditation. Pucci published the volume to escape from the tight corner into which he had been driven by his lack of success in Paris and win back some of the support that he seemed to have lost forever as a result of the disputes in Paris. The way that he hastened to send it to as many friends, intellectuals, universities and ecclesiastical institutions as possible speaks volumes. His covering letters combined bitterness at all the wrongs to which he had been subjected with pride in the excellence of his proposed doctrines; recipients of his book and letter included Monsignor Ottavio Mirto Frangipani in Cologne, William Gent in England, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Justus Lipsius in Leuven, the Orders of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, Queen Elizabeth of England, William Cecil in London and Basilius Amerbach in Basle.<sup>15</sup> Unsurprisingly, the remaining copies ended up in France. Some of the first to receive the work, besides Henry of Navarre, were the Archbishop of Bourges, Renaud de Beaune, and the Marquis of Pisany, Jean de Vivonne,<sup>16</sup> all high-ranking figures closely linked to Charles of Bourbon, who also received a copy. The Archbishop was a staunch defender of Henry IV and had been his almsman since 1591. On 25 July 1593 at Saint Denis, he also played a leading part in the King's absolution from his excommunication and re-admittance to the Church. The Marquis had long been the French ambassador in Rome under Sixtus V and was sent back there by Henry IV in 1594. Pucci had probably come into contact with them during his early days in Paris and turned to them one last time, warmly recommending his proposal and pointing out how incredibly useful it might be in solving the problems in France. The letters written on this occasion were all very much alike, making it clear that previous reactions in France had been negative. However, they suffered a similar fate: it is known that they were received with a deafening silence. The one (indirect) reply that Pucci received was by no means positive: it came from Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, the Duke of Bouillon and Viscount of Turenne, a Huguenot and Henry IV's Lieutenant General. Pucci's letter to him had been sent from The Hague in August 1592 and is worth quoting in full:

<sup>15</sup> Firpo, *Scritti*, 120 et seq.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, respectively 129–130, 126, 127–129, 124–125.

Although Your Most Illustrious Lordship has not addressed the kindest of words to me recently, I do not love your Lordship any less and continue to revere you, having received some signs of good deeds from you [...]. For this reason, I have taken pains to send you and your doctors [Calvinist theologians] a little book, which cannot be confuted by them, in which I have included the sum total of the reasons I hold against the opinion which is wrongly believed by the different schools of Christians in these times; they greatly disturb all our laws and are the ruin of Europe, exposing us to the mercy and scorn of nations that are enemies of Christianity [...]. The passing of time and the reports of others will demonstrate to Your Most Illustrious Excellency and Your supporters that I did not deserve to be so unexpectedly rebuked by different ecclesiastics when I proffered that heavenly treasure that was received by other peoples: and they shall go to the head of this nation, for which I beseech from God greatness and happiness.<sup>17</sup>

“A little book, that cannot be confuted” by “your doctors” is how Pucci presented the volume to the Duke of Bouillon, clearly alluding to the Calvinist theologians that were members of the Duke’s entourage. However, in almost mocking contradiction of its author’s expectations, *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* soon fell into the hands of one of the very same Calvinist theologians for the precise purpose of being confuted, most probably at the behest of the Duke of Bouillon himself. Indeed, it is quite plausible that the author of the first confutation of Pucci’s volume, the French Calvinist François du Jon—an authoritative theologian and able controversialist—had first discussed the idea of replying to Pucci with the Duke of Bouillon. The two had met in the summer of 1592; soon after the publication of *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, Henry IV instructed Bouillon to join the French theologian in Heidelberg, where he lived and taught, in order to persuade him to become the King’s personal counsellor. At the time, du Jon was one of the most distinguished figures in the French Calvinist world, as well as one of the sharpest and most cutting polemicists of the day. He was 47 years old with a distinguished career behind him. Henry selected him from a great number of candidates, intrigued by his diplomatic skills and irenic sensibilities, qualities which he had developed by spending significant periods of his life in border areas affected by frequent changes in their alliances and a climate of impending repression. He had studied law in Lyons and theology in Geneva; in 1565, he became a minister of the secret Calvinist Church in Antwerp and when Catholic repression became harsher,

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<sup>17</sup> Firpo, *Scritti*, 127.

he fled to the Palatinate, where Frederick III offered him a position as minister of the French-speaking church of refugees from the Southern Netherlands in Schönau. In 1573, the Prince Elector invited him to move to Heidelberg to prepare a German translation of the Old Testament together with Immanuel Tremellius. However, the Lutheran Restoration under Frederick's successor forced him to leave Heidelberg in 1578 and take refuge in Neustadt, where John Casimir had founded an academy. For many years, du Jon was a minister and professor of Hebrew at the local university, until he returned to Heidelberg as a professor of theology in 1584 when reverted to Calvinism.<sup>18</sup> It was there that the King's emissary, Bouillon, met him, probably bringing with him a copy of Pucci's book, which he had just received.<sup>19</sup> The Duke's insistence soon overcame du Jon's initial reluctance; the recent death of his wife and his worries about his young children, along with his desire to devote himself entirely to teaching, could not compete with the King's pressing demands. Du Jon thus set off for Paris escorted by his noble companion and after being given a diplomatic mission in the Palatinate, he was called upon to help edit a French confession of faith, toning down the more controversial aspects of Calvinist doctrine in view of a religious agreement with the Catholics. According to what du Jon wrote a few months later to the "Geneva Pope", Théodore de Bèze, Calvin's successor, he only accepted to do it with reluctance—because of the King's insistence—and regretted it immediately afterwards.<sup>20</sup> However, the

18 On Du Jon's biography and thought, in addition to the classic work by F.-W. Cuno, *Franciscus Junius der ältere Professor der Theologie und Pastor (1545–1602). Sein Leben und Wirken, seine Schriften und Briefe* (Geneva, Slatkine reprints, 1971; 1 ed., Amsterdam 1891), see B.A. Venemans, *Franciscus Junius en zijn Eirenicum de pace ecclesiae catholicae* (Leiden, 1977), 1–40; C. De Jonge, *De irenische ecclesiologie van Franciscus Junius 1545–1602* (Nieuwkoop, B. De Graaf, 1980: henceforth quoted as De Jonge, 1980), as well as the recent T. Sarx, *Franciscus Junius die Ältere (1545–1602). Ein Reformierte Theologe in Spannungsfeld zwischen spathumanistischer Irenik und reformierter Konfessionalisierung* (Goettingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), who does not mention Du Jon's writing against Pucci on which we focus our attention in the following pages.

19 Already on August 30, 1592, probably shortly after receiving the gift of his copy, Du Jon wrote to his friend Henricus Smetius that he had begun to work on the refutation of Pucci's volume (cf. Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 219). In just six days the news reached Amsterdam, where Jakob Harmensz (Arminius) could announce to his friend Johann Wtenbogaert the news concerning the publication of Pucci's writing, announcing at the same time that Du Jon was already preparing a confutation of that work (*ibid.*).

20 "Quant à la confession dont vous escrivez, je voudroye que ceux qui s'en sont formalisez eussent esté en ma place (car je ne fis jamais voyage tant à regret que cestuy là) et qu'ils sceussent la demande du roy, l'avis que je luy donnay et le moyen que j'y ay tenu. Somme, ce sont thèses que le roy mit alors en avant comme de son particulier pour acheminer une

reliability of this version is significantly weakened by the evidence of an ill-concealed attempt to convince his influential interlocutor about an operation that sacrificed the purity of Calvinist doctrine on the altar of a political compromise that the latter was unlikely to accept. Indeed, the letter's attempt to justify matters did not achieve its purpose. Bèze continued to have doubts about him even after receiving the missive and towards the end of the century he opposed the appointment of du Jon to the Chair of Theology at the University of Geneva, which he had occupied himself until that moment.<sup>21</sup>

While du Jon was not suited to doctrinal compromise, the spirit of reconciliation that had inspired Henry IV's initiative was not in contrast with his ideas. It is no coincidence that du Jon was working on one of the best-known irenic treatises of the time when he accepted the King of France's proposal. It was published soon after in Latin (entitled *Eirenicum de pace Ecclesiae catholicae inter christianos*) and French (with the different title *Le paisible chrestien, ou de la paix d'Eglises catholiques*). The two versions, one dedicated to Maurice of Hesse and the other to the French clergy, are almost identical.<sup>22</sup> The *Eirenicum* was a hymn to the reconciliation of all believers in a common brotherhood in the name of Christ. It was an invitation to abandon affinity with individual churches of origin (*Ecclesiae particulares*), which consisted of mortals and were therefore subject to all the typical imperfections of earthly fallibility, and unite in an ideal common *Ecclesia catholica* or *universalis*.<sup>23</sup> The peace

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conférence amiable et ouyr la dessus l'un et l'autre parti [...] Dieu me face la grâce de ne rien fere plus legièrement en ma vie que cela n'a esté faict, et à tous ensemble de ne rien juger legièrement;" Du Jon to Bèze, December 10, 1593, in De Vries, *Genève pépinière du calvinisme hollandais*, 2, 55–56; S.M. Manetsch, *Theodore Beza and the Quest for Peace in France, 1572–1598* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, Brill, 2000), 223.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bèze's letter, dated October 19/29, 1599, in *Registres de la Compagnie des pasteurs de Genève au temps de Calvin*, ed. by J.F. Bergier, R.M. Kingdon, O. Fatio, et al., vols. 1–8 (Geneva, Droz, 1962–1986), v. 7, 181; S.M. Manetsch, *Theodore Beza*, 223–224, footnote 7.

On the close friendship between Du Jon and Gomar, but also on the long correspondence maintained by Du Jon with Arminius, Gomar's greatest opponent, cf. C. Bangs, *Arminius. A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Grand Rapids, Asbury Press, 1985; first edition 1971), 234.

<sup>22</sup> The Latin version expressed a desire for peace in an area such as the German profoundly marked by divisions between individual churches, while the dedication addressed to the French clergy just after the conversion to Catholicism of Henry IV consisted of an appeal to the defense of the identity and the tradition of the Gallican Church and expressed an unconditional support to the French monarch, whose power, recalled Du Jon, came directly from God; *Preface*, in Du Jon, *Le paisible chrestien*; cf. also Cuno, *Franciscus Junius*, 141–145.

<sup>23</sup> Any human attempt to explain the truth of God and build around it their worldly church was an attempt by definition imperfect: no visible church—Du Jon explained—could

and unity of the *Ecclesia* were the most sacred gift that God had given to man and renouncing it was the greatest wrong one could do to him. All believers were God's children and therefore brothers. In a moment of inspiration, du Jon wrote that no one could break the bond with other people without breaking the bond with God.<sup>24</sup>

So why did one of the most conciliatory spirits in late sixteenth-century France decide to contest Francesco Pucci's book? After all, among other things, it was intended to provide a theological and doctrinal basis for a proposal of peace and reconciliation and lead to a positive solution to the wars of religion tearing France apart. Some answers can be found in the previously unpublished documents regarding the Paris disputations in 1591, the reactions in circles close to Henry IV and, above all, in the irenicist Jean Hotman's invaluable papers.<sup>25</sup> As we have seen, the best explanation for the inclusion of du Jon's name on an irenicist list from which Pucci's name had been removed probably lies in the institutional and *étatique* character of the model of irenicism spread and popularized by Hugo Grotius in the 1620s; as Hotman decided to select authors and texts of irenicist inspiration that were open to dialogue and reconciliation, but were always bound by their affinity to an institutional Church, whether Catholic or Protestant, his model excluded free spirits or "heretics of all churches", which is how Pucci was considered at the time. Du Jon's work against Pucci,<sup>26</sup> published in Lyons in late 1592, provides further food for thought.<sup>27</sup>

Pucci's dedication of the work to Pope Clement VIII would have alarmed any other Calvinist controversialist, but not du Jon. In his eyes, Rome had numerous defects, primarily that it claimed exclusivity on the title of the apostolic

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then proclaim itself as the only true church. No one, in other words, could assume the presumption to proclaim himself as the sole holder of divine truth.

<sup>24</sup> C. De Jonge, "Franciscus Junius (1545–1602) and the English Separatists at Amsterdam," in D. Baker, ed., *Reform and the Reformation: England and the Continent c1500–c1750* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1979), 165–173.

<sup>25</sup> See *supra*, ch. iv and v.

<sup>26</sup> Du Jon, *Catholicae doctrinae*.

<sup>27</sup> Between Du Jon's irenicism and his predisposition to controversy there was less contrast than one might imagine. Not only because, alongside philosophical exegesis, biblical exegesis and dogmatic learning of the Holy Scriptures, the refutation of error was integral to the University's theological mission. But also because his tireless irenical efforts did not prevent him from challenging vigorously those whom he said hampered the plan of universal peace and reconciliation. The refutation of error (or of untruth) was for him a means, therefore, not an end in itself. His goal was always the recovery of the unity of the Church and the reconstruction of the Christian community.

and universal Church. The Roman Church's decision that the Pope should be at Christ's side or even replace him as the sole true prince of the Church, the hierarchical structure it had adopted and the worldly corruption that dictated its internal political decisions were more than enough to demonstrate that this absurd claim lacked any basis.<sup>28</sup> However, these reasons were not sufficient to exclude Rome from the Christian community and reject the distinct possibility that some members of the Church of Rome were God's chosen people, as he was convinced they were.<sup>29</sup> If anything, the shrewd controversialist saw the decision to dedicate a book of this kind to the newly elected Pope—moreover published in Leiden—as an act of pure madness and such audacity that the only term to define it was “insane”:<sup>30</sup> he ironically commented that there was nothing to say, except wish that its author would soon return to his senses.<sup>31</sup> The learned, combative French irenicist was not alarmed by the author's ostentatious search for papal and Roman approval; the irritation caused by Pucci's pamphlet was mainly rooted in the very reasons for which it had been conceived and published. To Du Jon's way of thinking, only one circumstance could justify breaking his self-imposed golden rule of employing charity and reciprocal love to resolve all differences or arguments in matters of religion that might arise among the community of believers.<sup>32</sup> In other words, a public reply or censure was only necessary when someone explicitly declared that he was writing with the sole purpose of rebutting accusations made against him, which was the case of “he who [...] alleged for any reason he wants to

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28 Du Jon, *Admonition chrestienne*, pp. 7–8.

29 C. De Jonge, *De irenische ecclesiologie van Franciscus Junius (1545–1602). Schets aan de hand van zijn geschrift le paisible chrestien*, in *Feestbundel uitgegeven ter gelegenheid van het 75-jarig bestaan van het kerkhistorisch gezelschap S.S.S.*, E. Oort, H. Beck, H. Wevers, eds. (Leiden, 1977), 50–74, 63.

30 Du Jon, *Catholicae doctrinae*, c. A4r.

31 *Ibid.*, cc. A4r–v.

32 Interdictions, punishments, censures were far removed from the true Christian spirit and were to be avoided at all costs (cf. Du Jon, *Le paisible chrestien*, 174). Even the written reply to divergent doctrines had to leave room for more useful and edifying methods. If the decision to respond came from a wave of affection for the opponent, then the right thing to do was to settle the matter in private. However, if the intent was to do something useful for those who had heard of or would otherwise have heard of those doctrines then, complained Du Jon, nobody could benefit from a public controversy: not those who up to that time were unaware of the news, nor those who would remain firm in their certainties, nor those who were already “envelopez d'erreur”, but not the “infirme” and “foibles,” for which the dispute would not obtain a better result than to increase their confusion (Du Jon, *Le paisible chrestien*, 284–286).

publish his writing for the love of himself" ("celuy qui [...] allegue pour toute raison qu'il veuille publier son escrit pour l'amour de soy-mesme").<sup>33</sup> For du Jon, this self-love, the "special look" ("regard particulier") which he had already stigmatized in his dedication to the French clergy, was the real obstacle to the achievement of common good. It would have been sufficient to distribute "a little notice and a short added declaration without further confusing matters" ("une petite affiche et brieve declaration ajoutée sans brouiller des gros bobulaires"), or, even better, "convey the attention of our heart by letter, above all to one or two of those who are in doubt" ("faire entendre par lettres en particulier à un ou deux de ceux qui sont en doute l'intention de notre coeur").<sup>34</sup> Why should everyone be forced to take an interest in his individual case? A few months or perhaps only weeks before writing the confutation of Pucci's book, the French Calvinist had provocatively asked himself: "Why should I apply myself and amuse everyone with knowledge of my case?" ("Car à quoy faire employeray je et amuseray tout le monde a connoistre de mon cas?").<sup>35</sup>

However, the greatest threat that du Jon sensed in the slim volume was the doctrinal proposal that Pucci had placed at the centre of his universalistic project; in his opinion, it constituted mortal danger for the Christian faith and the very existence of the *Ecclesia universalis*. The French irenicist saw the idea that all men were destined to salvation because they were illuminated by a natural and innate faith in God, which was efficacious by itself for the purpose of reaching the kingdom of Heaven, as even more nefarious than overestimating human reason with regard to divine truth in the Holy Scriptures, which he had already denounced in his confutation of Anabaptist and Antitrinitarian writings.<sup>36</sup> Against such heretics—along with those, whether Jews or Muslims,

33 Du Jon, *Le paisible chrestien*, 286.

34 *Ibid.*, 287.

35 *Ibid.*, 286 e 287. From this point of view the case of the author of *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* greatly resembled the case of Jean Haren, a Protestant minister converted to Catholicism, with whom he was personally acquainted and with whom he had recently dealt (cf. Du Jon, *Admonition chrestienne*, on which see also De Jonge, *De irenische ecclesiologie*, 145–147).

36 Cf. De Jonge, *De irenische ecclesiologie*, 130. Against Anabaptists and anti-Trinitarians Du Jon came to theorize the legality of the death penalty, thus also justifying the death sentence issued in 1553 by Calvin in the case of Michael Servetus. Against the anti-Trinitarians, in particular, he wrote, in the early 1590s, some of his most violent invectives. On these *defensiones*, finally republished all together in Du Jon's *Opera theologica* (Genevae, 1607, 2, 1–228), cf. De Jonge, *De irenische ecclesiologie*, 151–152. On the first among them, written against the «errori Samosatenici» of Christian Francken's *Enumeratio*, see also L. Firpo, "Il vero autore di un celebre scritto antitrinitario: Christian Francken non Lelio

who did not accept Christ as “caput Ecclesiae” and refused the Christian sacraments—it was permissible, almost right and proper, to arm oneself with pen and paper, on condition that no harm would be done to the weakest and simple people; this was avoided by rigorous use of Latin, the language of the erudite. In cases like these, he felt that a polemic produced by skilled theologians, which was limited to a narrow circle of scholars and written to serve Christian truth, could make an important contribution to the unity of the Church.<sup>37</sup>

Pucci's doctrine thus placed him among the worst enemies of the Holy Scriptures and Christian doctrine.<sup>38</sup> Du Jon was convinced that Pucci's ideas jeopardized a heritage that had been universally accepted by all Christianity for centuries: he cast doubt on “doctrines concerning the glory of God and our salvation that had been defended by everybody in the Church in all ages.”<sup>39</sup> If Pucci's doctrines were accepted, it would lead to nothing but “disunity of souls, offense of words, disorder of things” (disiunctionem animorum, sermonum offensas, rerum conturbationem).<sup>40</sup> So what was this Catholic doctrine that had obtained the unanimous approval of Christians for centuries and in what way did it come into such bitter conflict with Pucci's ideas? Deliberately

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Socino,” *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi* 104, (1958), 51–68, now in idem, *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia*, 97–115: 114; on his *Defensio* against two works written by Lelio and Fausto Sozzini (Lelio's *Brevis explicatio in primum caput Evangelii Iohannis* and Fausto's *Explicatio primae partis primi capituli Iohannis*) which were discussed by Du Jon thinking that they were two different versions of the same writing finally republished together, see above all L. Sozzini, *Opere*, edizione critica, ed. A. Rotondò (Florence, Olschki, 1986), *Nota critica*, 341–344.

37 De Jonge, *De irenische ecclesiologie*, 156–159. Du Jon was deeply convinced that the Bible should be accessible to all and that the Tridentine decree that forbade the reading of the Sacred Scripture in the vernacular was deeply flawed (he would write on this topic just before his death in his *Theses elegeticae*; cf. *ibid.*, 153); however, he was equally convinced that the illiterate are not competent to pass judgment in religious controversies, nor would it be useful for them to be called upon to deal with them. An opinion on these matters should be reserved for expert theologians. Only by maintaining this important distinction, would it be possible to remove the emotional factor from the conflict between religions, letting the simple faithful concentrate on the essence of divine truth revealed in the Bible, in other words on what united them to other believers (*ibid.*, 156–157).

38 Du Jon was firmly convinced that the only true Church was the one based on the divine truth of Scripture and that all those who denied its fundamental value could not be part of the *Ecclesia catholica et universale* (*Le paisible chrestienne*, 161, and more generally De Jonge, *De irenische Ecclesiologie*, 136–137).

39 Du Jon, *Catholicae doctrinae*, A5r.

40 *Ibid.*

choosing never to mention the author's name,<sup>41</sup> du Jon answered these questions with a sequence of repetitions, each one introduced by the same *incipit*. First of all, he wrote that 'Catholic doctrine', 'not questioned by any devout man' ('a nemine piorum hactenus controversa'), proclaimed that by his very nature man was "the son of anger and alien to the kingdom of Heaven",<sup>42</sup> while Pucci denied it. Catholic doctrine upheld the "strength of original sin", the original *vulnus* that makes every man not only "unworthy of the glorious vision of God" but also "worthy of eternal death", whereas the author of *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* rejected this position, accusing its supporters of describing God as being "unmerciful and inhuman."<sup>43</sup> 'Catholic doctrine,' du Jon went on, maintained that "natural man is not capable, regarding any faculty deriving from his fundamental nature, of things that pertain to the Holy Spirit"; for the purposes of salvation, he specified, "nature is diametrically opposed to grace, just as natural light is opposed to the spiritual light of the grace through which we obtain salvation." Pucci turned this argument on its head, denying the existence of the "preventive grace that Christ communicates to us through the Holy Spirit, in order to inspire faith and to infuse it into us", affirming on the contrary that "faith [...] is natural."<sup>44</sup> In short, by writing that we all receive a natural faith that is universally salvific at birth, or even in the maternal womb, he denied the centrality of divine grace in the process of man's salvation. Elsewhere in his book, the French Calvinist seemed to suggest that Pucci attributed a universal efficacy to divine grace that only actually existed for the elect. Pucci confused sufficient grace (granted to all) with efficacious grace (granted only to the elect). "According to Catholic doctrine," wrote du Jon, "God's salvific grace is granted and shown to all by external vocation, while by internal vocation it is individually conveyed to the elect with gracious efficacy and with greatly varying effects." On the contrary, Pucci "denied that it was necessary to distinguish the manner of vocations and efficacy." And where 'Catholic doctrine' maintained that "divine love has its degrees: that all men are loved by God as

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<sup>41</sup> Du Jon chose to "dissimulate" the author's name ("nomen certo consilio dissimulare cupio;" *ibid.*, A6r) and not give any indication regarding his identity. It was not just a rhetorical device to diminish the importance of his interlocutor; it was a response to specific controversialist logic: his aim was to treat the doctrinal content of the volume, avoiding in any way that the polemic be reduced to a personal matter.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, A2v–A3r.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, A3r.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, A3r–v.

they are human beings, but the elect in Christ our Saviour are loved most of all," Pucci "denied differences in the degree of the love of God."<sup>45</sup>

Whether Pucci's declarations stressed the amplitude of the salvific efficacy of grace or focused on the idea of natural faith, du Jon saw them as the expression of an intolerable denial of the gravity of sin and man's original sin. In addition, he felt they were a dramatic breach of the basic rules of the game: Pucci did not disagree with any particular doctrine or the interpretation of a particular dogma or sacrament, nor did he restrict himself, as other Catholic polemicists did, to using the authority of the Pope and tradition to sully the truth of the Holy Scriptures. Instead, he radically subverted the common heritage of doctrines shared by members of the *Ecclesia catholica*. Declaring that "common reason illuminates the minds of individual men" meant denying a truth shared by all Christians, namely that divine matters overstep the limits of human reason and can only be accessed through divine revelation.<sup>46</sup> The affirmation that "faith in God is natural, innate and intrinsic in all men" overturned the foundations of faith because, as du Jon pointed out, faith is not a gift shared by all, but one that derives from the Holy Spirit and is therefore not natural.<sup>47</sup> Finally, writing that "through the sacrifice and universal grace of the Almighty Father, each and every man will be saved through Christ" meant denying another issue that he felt was universally shared, namely that divine grace was only reserved to men who have met and known the Son of God ("omnes homines in Christo").<sup>48</sup> The unlimited amplitude of the kingdom of God presented

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45 *Ibid.*, A3v. To emphasize this aspect, in a "short account of the orthodox and Christian doctrine," Du Jon undertook to clarify the different degrees of participation in the grace of God to which man could aspire. Universal, common, special and unique were the four ways in which God communicated his grace: the first, the universal manifestation of divine love towards all human beings, worked equally in all elected and *presciti* (prescents), the second, the common grace, was shown in its potential to everybody, although it did not operate equally in every man; the last two, finally, the particular and the singular, the only ones effective for salvation, were available only to elect (*ibid.*, 20, but see also *ibid.*, 16, and more specifically on the 'preparatory' character of the universal and common "vocatio", cf. *ibid.*, 22–23).

46 Du Jon, *Catholicae doctrinae*, 27.

47 *Ibid.*, 28.

48 *Ibid.*, 29–30. For the same kind of objections raised against Pucci by the ministers of the French Church in London in the mid-1570s, see Rotondò, "Il primo soggiorno in Inghilterra," 264. Immediately after, Du Jon stated that if those words signified that grace had been universally shown by God to all men, then the term would be acceptable. What he could not accept was Pucci's interpretation of those words in terms of redeeming efficacy (Du Jon, *Catholicae doctrinae*, 30).

by Pucci implied that infants could be saved even without receiving the sacrament of baptism (precisely because of the natural faith received at birth) or, even more boldly, that all men, including Jews and Muslims, could gain salvation outside the visible structures of the Churches if they let themselves be guided by their general innate trust in God. It was therefore a concept that not only delegitimized every constituted Church, but also opened up the prospect of universal tolerance, for example towards the populations of the New World who, although ignorant of the foundations of any religious confession, still enjoyed their natural primordial innocence. Du Jon and his irenicist vision of the *Ecclesia Catholica* or *universalis* had little in common with this perspective. In his “universal Church”, there was only room for those who believed in the one possible truth—the Holy Scriptures—and Christ as the only *Caput Ecclesiae*. Above all, there was no room for anyone proclaiming the existence of a natural faith.

### 3 The Lutheran Attack

Du Jon's *Collatio* was the first voice raised in public against *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, but it was not the only one. Within a few months, also thanks to the unflagging propaganda work promoted by its author, the pamphlet reached the farthest-flung corners of sixteenth-century Europe. The pamphlet, which Pucci hoped would reveal the soundness of his theological proposal to the world, did not achieve the desired success and recognition. Instead, it encountered the hostility of two other controversialists, two very different learned scholars who also had little in common with du Jon in terms of their religious beliefs: the Lutheran Lukas Osiander and the Jesuit Nicolaus Serarius. These confutations resoundingly confirmed the terms of François du Jon's controversialist analysis, decreed the definitive condemnation of the volume by the *respublica christiana literarum* and heralded the conclusive intellectual isolation of Pucci in Europe, somehow foreshadowing the fate that soon awaited him over the Alps.

Lukas Osiander was one of the most authoritative representatives of the Lutheran Church in Tübingen. He can be seen in the context of the delicate process of adjustment by the Lutheran world in search of new channels, a world that was constantly threatened by its awkward Calvinist neighbour. The Montbéliard Colloquies were an important stage in this process. These talks were organized by Duke Friedrich von Württemberg in March 1586 in order to resolve the thorny problem of the enforced cohabitation of Calvinist and Lutheran confessions under his jurisdiction. They soon began to resemble an act

of final reckoning between the leaders of the Lutheran Churches and the most important representative of the Geneva world, Théodore de Bèze. Together with Jakob Andreä, the author of the well-known *Liber concordiae* published in Dresden in 1580, Osiander soon found himself involved in a wide-ranging discussion on the most important doctrinal matters at stake, from the Last Supper to the person of Christ and predestination. The talks achieved nothing, but the events in the following months proved that the fuse lit by Montbéliard would not easily be extinguished. Indeed, after the colloquies had ended, Osiander and Andreä launched a violent propaganda campaign against Bèze's unbending predestinarianism by publishing *Acta colloquii Montis Belligartensis* (in Latin and German in Tübingen, 1587), which was a version of the facts based exclusively on their work notes.<sup>49</sup> Bèze reacted to the Lutheran provocation with a *Responsio*, followed a year later by a *Responsionis pars altera*, in which he reiterated his predestinarian positions. Andreä then published *Epitome colloquii Montis Belligartensis* (1588) in Tübingen, definitively setting forth the terms of an open battle. This was the background setting for the appearance of Samuel Huber's *Theses*, a volume published in 1590 with Jakob Andreä's authoritative endorsement that lauded the benefit of Christ as universally efficacious for all humankind.<sup>50</sup> Barely a year later, Francesco Pucci came across this book at the Frankfurt book fair and was absolutely fascinated by it. Indeed, some years later, in an outburst of enthusiasm that would cost him dearly, he did not hesitate to send a copy to the Pope in order to testify somewhat naïvely that his doctrines, which were similar to Huber's, also had Lutheran followers.<sup>51</sup> The appearance of the *Theses* in the German publishing world marked the first significant cracks on the Lutheran front. From its initial manuscript distribution, Lukas Osiander and the Stuttgart theologians attempted to support the censorship of certain statements seen as damaging and only decided to stop when the text was published.<sup>52</sup> After the death of Jakob Andreä soon afterwards in 1590, the volume attracted growing hostility, as it was now without the support of its authoritative patron. In 1593 and 1594, even the last remaining theology faculties that supported Huber—in Wittenberg and Rostock—turned their

49 It was a reconstruction of the entire debate based on the notes taken by Osiander, Andreä and the superintendent of Montbéliard; cf. Biagioni, "Introduzione," to Pucci, *De praedestinatione*, 13, but above all J. Raitt, *The Colloquy of Montbéliard. Religion and Politics in the Sixteenth Century* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), 160 ff.

50 Biagioni, "Incontri," 401.

51 Letter of Pucci to Clement VIII, Salzburg, January 25, 1593, in Firpo, *Scritti*, 343–346; and *supra*, ch. III.

52 Biagioni, "Incontri," 400.

back on him, making him isolated within the Lutheran world.<sup>53</sup> Pucci's *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* was first distributed in this context and it is easy to understand why it was Lukas Osiander, supported by the theology faculties in Tübingen and Stuttgart, that put pen to paper to attack a book reiterating doctrines similar to those that had been marginalized from the fragile position of Lutheran orthodoxy with some difficulty.

However, Lukas Osiander found something more than Huber's doctrines in Pucci's work, something not immediately identifiable with the categories available to him as a Lutheran controversialist. Pucci's heresy contained a strange and original mix of heterodox elements that must have seemed much more dangerous than the poison spread by his Lutheran companion: it colluded "secretly" ("occulte") with Muhammad's Qur'an; it opened the door of the Church to Christ's sworn enemies, the Jews; it promised salvation even to the "pagans" ("ethnici"); like the Anabaptists, it denied original sin; like Schwenckfeld's followers, it denied the need for any evangelical ministry; like the Calvinists, it played down the force and substance of the Sacraments; and, finally, like the Chiliasts, it invented the fable of Christ's "corporeal" kingdom on earth. Although he declared that he wished to amplify the efficacy of Christ's merits, in the end Pucci mixed up "the whole of Christianity" (*totum christianismum*) with all other religions, eliminating any distinctions between them. In other words, Pucci subverted the very foundations of Christianity.<sup>54</sup> According to Osiander, Pucci's doctrines involved the potential dissolution of Christianity by promising salvation to the entire human race without distinction;<sup>55</sup> they maintained that everyone could achieve it without any special divine grace. According to Osiander and the theologians of Stuttgart and Tübingen, this meant stating that one could be saved "even outside of Christ" and be a good and faithful Christian simply by living "honestly". It therefore meant allowing for the existence of faithful believers "without faith" and Christians "without Christ". It clearly went without saying that no religion offered salvation indiscriminately to everyone.<sup>56</sup> According to their analysis, the most worrying point—which subverted all the foundations of Christianity—was the denial of a principle shared by all confessions, the principle according to which there

53 These events were reconstructed by G. Adam, *Der Streit um die Prädestination im ausgehenden 16. Jahrhundert. Eine Untersuchung zu den Entwürfen von Samuel Huber und Aegidius Hunnius*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1970; and recently discussed anew by Biagioni, "Incontri".

54 "Totius Christianismi fundamenta convellit" (Osiander, *Refutatio*, 196).

55 *Ibid.*, 24.

56 "Nullam religionem habet, qui probat omnes" (Osiander, *Refutatio*, 3).

is no faith outside divine revelation; they reiterated “faith comes from hearing” (*Fides est ex auditu*). Without knowing Christ, no one could be saved:<sup>57</sup> they stressed that salvation was impossible for those who had never heard the word of God.<sup>58</sup> This “divine afflatus”, which according to Pucci “Christianizes” every man from birth and is sufficient for him to achieve salvation, this baseless “fable” of a “first, universal and saving light of knowledge of God” (*prima et universali luce agnitionis Dei salvifica*)<sup>59</sup> dangerously extended the confines of Christianity until they completely vanished: Jews, Turks and even “unfaithful people” could be saved, despite having no knowledge of “Christ the saviour”.<sup>60</sup> The consequence of following Pucci’s line of thought and insisting on the value of natural faith, reducing “every theology to human reason”<sup>61</sup> and trampling over the message of the Holy Scriptures as he did,<sup>62</sup> would be to claim that “Jews, Turks and pagans are happier than Christians because they have never heard the word of God.”<sup>63</sup>

In the immediately preceding years, Osiander had struggled vigorously against Bèze’s rigid Calvinist predestinarianism and been one of the protagonists of a difficult battle to defend the identity of the Lutheran Church. In the *Refutatio*, he did not miss the opportunity to stress how far his positions were from those of Calvinist orthodoxy. Though being careful not to confuse the radical opposition between Pucci’s optimistic concept and Calvinist pessimism,<sup>64</sup> Osiander frequently made the accusation of Calvinism in his writings, especially to stigmatize statements that baptism was superfluous for purposes of salvation and the frequent underestimation of the gravity of original sin.<sup>65</sup> However, as we have seen, the conclusions drawn from the Lutheran

57 *Ibid.*, 2. “The instrumental cause of our salvation is faith in Christ and Christ does not benefit those who have no faith,” he wrote *ibid.*, 46; cf. also *ibid.*, 100.

58 *Praefatio*, in *ibid.*, p. A3v.

59 *Ibid.*, 108. “All men are by nature adverse to God,” reaffirmed at p. 110.

60 *Ibid.*, 3.

61 *Praefatio*, in *ibid.*, p. A3r. “F. Puccius interpretatur S. Scripturam secundum rationis naturalis iudicium” (*ibid.*, 5).

62 “Contra apertissimum sacrae Scripturae testimonium” (*ibid.*, p. 2).

63 For Osiander’s provocation, see *ibid.*, 88.

64 Cf. for example the preface written by from the Tübingen and Stuttgart theologians (*Praefatio*, in *ibid.*, p. A5v).

65 *Ibid.*, 20; but see also *Praefatio*, *ibidem*, p. A6r. Osiander warned of similarities between the thought of Pucci and doctrinal elements typical of Anabaptists and the followers of Schwenkfeld. If Pucci had been able to talk openly about that topic, wrote provocatively Osiander, he would have won proselytes among “Schwenkfeldianos, qui Baptismum ad salutem necessarium negant”, as well as “Anabaptistas, qui contendunt, nihil opus esse,

theologian's analysis matched those of the Calvinist du Jon in a way I would describe as surprising. Both saw the greatest danger of Pucci's doctrinal proposal in his unlimited extension of the promise of eternal salvation, the "afflatus", the natural faith that was sufficient by itself to achieve eternal life. Both saw Pucci's work as a mortal danger to Christianity.

#### 4 The Pelagian Error. The Catholic Reply

How did the aforementioned Catholic controversialist Serarius react to the text and what dangers did he identify in Pucci's work? Did he agree with these awkward allies? Serarius had been a professor of Theology and Holy Scripture at the University of Würzburg since the 1580s (a position he would continue to hold until 1604, when he was elected to the Chair of Theology at Mainz in the final years of his life). He probably met Pucci in early 1593;<sup>66</sup> Würzburg was Pucci's last stop on his long journey before the final leg to Salzburg, where he was arrested and sent to prison in Rome.<sup>67</sup> It is not hard to picture Pucci busily trying to contact the most eminent local figures, handing out copies of his volume, fuelled by his customary desire to persuade others of the quality of his proposed doctrines. He probably did not know that the operation to capture him had already been underway for some weeks, that Nuncio Cesare Speciano had been on his trail for some time and that papal diplomacy was about to pounce on its target.<sup>68</sup> Pucci pursued his obsessive search for support and it is

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ut pueri baptizentur, eo quod virtute meriti Christi possint absque Baptismo salvari", and those "Calvinistas, qui non concedunt, homines per Baptismum rinasci" (Osiander, *Refutatio*, 166). Pucci was also charged with Calvinism, not only because of his assertions on baptism; see *ibid.*, 6, 23 ("calvinistice interpretatur promissionem de Christo"), 49, 119, 125, 136 ("Puccius, una cum Calvinistis, non credit quod remissivo peccati originalis, et regeneratio, in baptismo severa fiat"), 171. According to Osiander Pucci shared with Schwenkfeld the intimate conviction of having, thanks to an inner illumination of the Holy Spirit, the ability to correctly interpret and proclaim God's message to humanity; see *ibid.*, 50, 59, 62, 88, 125, 157, 163, 172, 174.

66 On Serario, in addition to C. Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus: Bibliographie*, Nouv. ed., vols. 1–10 (Brussels-Paris, 1890–1909), 7, 1134–1145, see also R.S. Gerlich's entry, in *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús biográfico-temático*, C.E. O'Neill e Joaquín M. Domínguez (directores), 4 vols. (Rome-Madrid, Institutum Historicum-Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2001), 4, 3558–3559.

67 On the different phases of Pucci's capture, see the recent work by P. Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*.

68 *Ibid.* On this issue, see *infra* my *Epilogue*.

not hard to imagine him presenting a copy of *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* to the Jesuit theologian. As Serarius recounted, he had showed his copy to Prince-Bishop Julius, receiving in return the task of compiling an immediate censure. Within a few weeks, Giorgio Fleischmann's printing house published a fiery confutation bearing the lengthy title *Contra novos novi pelagiani et chiliastae, Francisci Pucci Filidini errores, quos sese in Anglia, Gallia, Hollandia, Helvetia et alibi multis probasse gloriatur; quosque per Germaniam peregrinando, colloquendo, suosque de Christi servatoris efficacitate libellos dissipando spargere incipit, libri duo* ('Against the new errors of the new Pelagian and Chiliasm Francesco Pucci, son of Dino, which he has boasted of bringing with him to England, France, Holland, Switzerland and many other places, and has started to spread in Germany by wandering, speaking, and spreading copies of his book The efficacy of Christ our Saviour') (Wirceburgi, 1593). The confutation could certainly not ignore the eye-catching dedication to Pope Clement VIII at the beginning of Pucci's work. What the Calvinist controversialist du Jon had seen as an unexpected object of scorn, an act of pure madness on the part of the author, appeared instead in the eyes of the Catholic polemicist as an act of intolerable arrogance. How had he dared to send the book to his Holiness the Pope with all its Pelagian and Chilastic errors? The Jesuit theologian seemed to be asking himself what blind arrogance had compelled this man to sully the name of the Roman Church with a book that was full of doctrines condemned by the Council of Trent.<sup>69</sup>

Apart from this and one or two other predictable distinctive elements,<sup>70</sup> the list of "Paradoxes of Dino's son [Pucci]" (*Filidini paradoxa*) confuted by

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69 In the opening pages of his writing Serarius identified four points in particular: Pucci had the audacity to present himself as a Catholic when any heretic such as he would never have dared to do so, and secondly, he dedicated the book to Pope Clement VIII with a choice, at least as arrogant and hypocritical as his decision to submit his work to the judgment of the "Holy Catholic apostolic and Roman Church", according to the formula used by the Florentine; finally, as a testament to his pride, he boasted continuously about enjoying the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Serarius, *Contra pelagiani*, 2).

70 Serarius's defense of the sacrament of baptism, for example, and more generally of the value of the sacraments, resembled more closely the position of his Lutheran colleague than to that of the French Calvinist. The Jesuit had felt doubly called into question by the repeated references to cardinal Bellarmine made by Pucci in his works. See, for example, the latter's statement censored by Serarius: "Baptismus ad salutem necessarius non est"; "Sacramenta sunt tantum contractus, et instrumenta repraesentantia, et obsignantia Dei benevolentiam, qua ille homines, antequam Sacraenta suscipiantur, imo ab omni aeternitate complectitur" (*ibidem*, p. 4). For Serarius's reference to Bellarmine's thought and for his concern to present the correct interpretation of Bellarmine's doctrine concerning

Serarius testifies that he focused on the same propositions stigmatized by du Jon and Osiander:<sup>71</sup> Christian faith is not necessary “for eternal salvation”; natural faith is sufficient for eternal salvation; it justifies salvation and guarantees it to man;<sup>72</sup> Christ’s grace, granted to all individually, is not only sufficient but also efficacious;<sup>73</sup> the original sin is null and void.<sup>74</sup> These assertions were the main polemical targets in the Catholic theologian’s confutation.<sup>75</sup> The most frightening idea was once again the latitudinarianism of salvation, the *ampli-tudo regni Dei* which the Jesuit felt to be a grave danger to Catholic orthodoxy. Pucci’s idea that all men, “benefited by their creator, aspire to that which is salutary to them and flee all that which can lead them to perdition, and this aspiration contains the promise of baptism,” seemed to him nothing but a “subterfuge of Chrysippus”, meaning that “even beasts would be saved because, by aspiring to that which is salutary, they potentially also aspire to baptism.”<sup>76</sup> The accusation used by the Jesuit to censure the doctrine was Pelagianism: “Etsi verbo negat”, although the author tried to deny the evidence, the volume was nothing but a faithful reassertion of the Pelagian heresy.<sup>77</sup>

This was not the first time that the spectre of Pelagius had arisen in reference to Pucci’s work, nor would it be the last. On the Lutheran front, a few months

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sacraments, see *ibid.*, 26, 36, 60, 72. Osiander too lingered over the same passages, though concluding differently that «haec assertio Bellarmini Calvinismum olet. Instrumenta hoc loco intelliguntur literae sigillis confirmatae» (Osiander, *Refutatio*, 179).

<sup>71</sup> The list of “Paradoxa Filidini Pelagiani” published by the Dutch historian Michael van Isselt, also known as Jansonius, in his *Mercurius Gallobelgicus, sive rerum in Gallia et Belgio potissimum, Hispania quoque, Italia, Anglia, Germania, Polonia vicinisque locis ab anno 1588 usque ad martirium anni praesentis 1594...* (Coloniae Agrippinae, apud G. Kempensem, 1594), 474–480—reported by Firpo in Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 221–226—was nothing else than a faithful transposition of Serarius’s list.

<sup>72</sup> “Fides haec naturalis, iustifica et salvifica est” (Serarius, *Contra pelagiani*, 2).

<sup>73</sup> “Gratia Christi, omnibus et singulis hominibus (quatenus homines sunt) non sufficiens tantum, sed efficax etiam est” (*ibid.*, 3).

<sup>74</sup> “Peccatum originale nullum est” (*ibid.*).

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 32–33; see also A. Gorfunkel, “Notizie bruniane, I. ‘Et partito per Paris per causa di tumulti, me ne andai in Germania; II. ‘Giordano Bruno e il mistero dell’ambasciata’,” *Rivista di storia della filosofia* (1997), 749–50; and *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus: Bibliographie*. Nouv. Ed. par C. Sommervogel, vols. 1–10 (Brussels-Paris, 1890–1909), 7, 1134–1145; 1136.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. his dedication to “Generoso et illustri domino, D. Rudolpho, comiti ab Helffenstain, baroni in Gundelfingen, intimo serenissimi Bavariae ducis consiliario, summo totius Bavaricae ditionis, aulaeque praefecto”; Serarius, *Contra pelagiani*, p. A2v.

before, Lukas Osiander had done the same thing, albeit in passing;<sup>78</sup> some time later, an Englishman, Andrew Willet, recalled the “error of the Pelagians” when referring precisely to Francesco Pucci’s doctrine. In the second edition (1594) of his *Synopsis Papismi*,<sup>79</sup> this well-known prolific anti-Catholic controversialist—who reconciled doctrinal positions that were very close to Calvinism with a strong sense of belonging to the Church of England—vigorously attacked the most recent supporters of the doctrine of the universality of grace.<sup>80</sup> Willet included Francesco Pucci (referred to as *Pucksius*) with his *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*<sup>81</sup> alongside Samuel Huber, the Lutheran theologian who wrote the *Theses* that had so favourably impressed Pucci and had already been confuted in 1592 by Jacobus Kimedoncius, a Reformed pastor from Kempen (Cologne), in his *De redemptione generis humanis*. He also mentioned the Dutchman Gellius Snecanus with his *Methodica descriptio* (‘Methodical Description’) (Leiden 1584), the forerunner of many Arminian doctrines, and the Danish Lutheran theologian Niels Hemmingsen, a pupil of Melanchthon and the author of a *Tractatus de gratia universalis seu salutaris omnibus hominibus* (‘Treatise on universal grace salvific to all men’) (Copenhagen 1591), in which he expressed his clear disagreement with Calvinist doctrine.<sup>82</sup> Although there are subtle doctrinal differences, all the authors mentioned by the English controversialist agreed that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross had granted salvation to all

78 “Si hoc vult Puccius, quod homo possit ex suis viribus in Christum credere, sine speciali Dei gratia, Pelagianus est,” cf. Osiander, *Refutatio*, 87 and 109; see also *ibid.*, 150.

79 A. Willet, *Synopsis Papismi, that is, a generall viewe of papistrie: wherein the whole mysterie of iniquitie, and summe of Antichristian doctrine is set downe, which is maintained this day by the Synagogue of Rome, against the Church of Christ* . . . (at London, printed by the Widdow Orwin, for Thomas Man, dwelling in Pater noster row at the signe of the Talbot, 1594). The first edition, two years earlier, did not contain those pages on the universality of grace referred to here. The work was constantly updated and expanded by its author in a number of editions over the years.

80 On Willet, cf. A. Milton, “Willet, Andrew,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 61, and Id., *Catholic and Reformed. The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 13–19, 31–45, as well as S. Tutino, “Thomas Pounds, Andrew Willet e la questione cattolica all’inizio del regno di Giacomo I,” in *Questioni di storia inglese tra Cinque e Seicento*, eds., S. Villani, S. Tutino, C. Franceschini, *Chromos* 8 (2003), 45–72; 58–72.

81 A. Willet, *Synopsis papismi*, 839 ff.

82 On these figures, see N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists. The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590–1640* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), *ad indicem*, and Id., *Aspects of English Protestantism 1530–1700* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2001), 163.

humankind.<sup>83</sup> Willet used the term ‘Pelagian’ to indicate this “error”, which he confuted using a “non-literal” interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>84</sup>

## 5 Bruno, Campanella and the Limits of the Kingdom of God

Unlike Osiander and Willet, who used Pelagianism to confute single aspects of Pucci’s interpretation, Serarius used it as the main—if not the only—interpretative key for his fearful pamphlet on Christ’s salvific efficacy. We shall return to this point later. Meanwhile, the Jesuit theologian made a mental association with another Italian exile who had defended similar and equally dangerous ideas in Würzburg a few years previously: “Five or six years ago there used to be an Italian here, an apostate like yourself, who arrived in these parts from England and France. He used to say, in front of me and other people, causing general laughter, that animals also possess the gift of reason and speech, which they use to communicate with each other; and he assured me that he would demonstrate this philosophy of his with a whole series of arguments, just as you do with your theology.”<sup>85</sup> He was naturally referring to Giordano Bruno. If the Jesuit controversialist had been more familiar with Erasmus of Rotterdam, he would not have found it difficult to trace the common source of this statement. He could have found the perfect passage for his purposes in Erasmus’s *Sermone della misericordia divina* (‘Sermon on divine mercy’), which Pucci had probably read during his years in Florence.<sup>86</sup> “How amply God’s mercy shows itself, reads Psalm 35: ‘The Lord shall save men and beasts,’ it says, ‘just as you

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83 *Ibid.*, 840. According to Willet’s interpretation, Huber argued that all people (believers and non-believers) are saved regardless of their faith; Pucci, however, had brought faith back to the center of his discourse, insisting on faith in God with which every man is naturally endowed; Hemmingsen and Snecanus finally, emphasized the role of divine grace which comes down from above upon all men (cf. *ibidem*, pp. 839–840).

84 “We must not take the letter, but followe the sense, where wee finde mention made of the universalitie of Christes death” (*ibidem*, p. 841). It is interesting to note that Willet, while recalling Bellarmine’s antipelagian commitment, also entered the name of that authoritative Jesuit among the supporters of the universality of divine grace, quoting a passage from his treatise on the Eucharist (*de Eucharistiae*, lib. 4 cap. 25); cf. *ibid.*, 839.

85 Serarius, *Contra pelagiani*, 32–33; *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus*, 1136; Gorfunkel, “Notizie bruniane,” 750.

86 Cf. *supra*, ch. 1.

have multiplied your mercy.' God does not save men alone but He also deigns to save beasts."<sup>87</sup>

There was therefore a thread linking the Dutch humanist's teaching, Francesco Pucci's manuscript and Giordano Bruno's beliefs (as well as Tommaso Campanella's, as we shall see). This thin line joined a number of aspects: the origins of European humanism and the theological ponderings of a few late sixteenth-century Italian thinkers, the positive concept of human nature defended by Erasmus and the late-Renaissance exaltation of the amplitude of divine mercy, and the affirmation of the centrality of human free will and the claim of the naturalness of faith, with its frequently disruptive results. The main feature of these interpretations was undoubtedly their anti-Lutheranism (or anti-Protestantism). While we barely need mention the terms of the celebrated polemic in the 1520s between the Dutch humanist and Luther, it is worth recalling that Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella made anti-Lutheranism the main pillar of their religious thinking, perhaps even more than Francesco Pucci.

Bruno confessed to a friend that heretics from France and England had ruined the "good living" (*ben vivere*) of Christianity by scorning works and preaching *iustitia sola fide*. During his first stay in Paris and then in London, he concluded that the Huguenots and the Puritans were primarily responsible for the civil wars that had caused such bloodshed in Europe: they were the real dissolvers of "human fellowship" (*convitto umano*).<sup>88</sup> His great accuser Giovanni Mocenigo told the Inquisitors: "He blamed Luther and Calvin and the other authors of heresies." Francesco Graziano echoed him by saying: "For what I know of him, he spoke ill of Luther and every other sect and praised only himself."<sup>89</sup> To Bruno's way of thinking, the real sin of the Reformed Church—the civil sin, the most serious of all—was taking away the value of merit, man's good works, unlike the Catholic Church, which for this reason "he liked more than the others". In short, it was through criticism of Calvinist predestination and profound hostility towards the Reformed world that Bruno had obtained the formula of the amplitude of divine mercy in a similar way to Pucci. It was this idea of universal salvation which, according to a witness at his Inquisition trial, led him to say that "there was no Hell, but there was Purgatory, which was the same thing as what we call Hell, but in fact it was Purgatory, because the torments of Hell were not eternal, but had to have an end and everyone

87 Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Scritti religiosi e morali*, ed. by C. Asso, introduction by A. Prosperi (Turin, Einaudi 2002), 320.

88 M. Ciliberto, *Giordano Bruno. Il teatro della vita* (Milan, Mondadori, 2007), 329.

89 *Ibid.*, 331.

had to be saved,”<sup>90</sup> or, according to another witness, “that there was no Hell and no one had to be damned to eternal punishment, but everyone had to be saved, even devils.”<sup>91</sup> Even animals, the Jesuit Serarius added. The fact that they both frequented places that were open to dialogue, like the French court or Rudolph II’s imperial court (Bruno was in Prague at the same time as Pucci), was reflected in their similar views on matters of religion. Indeed, Bruno dedicated his *Articuli adversos mathematicos* (‘Articles against mathematicians’) to Emperor Rudolph II, using the well-known *Preface* to develop a theme that he had already outlined in *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* (‘The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast’). As has recently been reaffirmed, he “identified a philanthropic religion based on God’s ‘universal love’ for all mankind, God’s immense mercy, as a ‘bond’ of ‘human fellowship’, returning to a central motif of the *Spaccio* and developing it further, in clear opposition to Luther’s God and, above all, to Calvin’s. It is this same merciful God who later drove him to declare in prison that all shall be saved, including the devils, because his anger cannot last for eternity.”<sup>92</sup>

In the second half of 1595, in the cells of the Dominican convent of Saint Sabina where he had been ordered to reside *loco carceris*, another philosopher whose name is frequently associated with Bruno, Tommaso Campanella, compiled his celebrated *Dialogo politico contro i luterani, calvinisti e altri eretici* (‘Political Dialogue against Lutherans, Calvinists and other heretics’).<sup>93</sup> This elegantly-titled work focused on the break-up of political and religious unity caused by the Reformed Church, maintaining that unity of spirit was essential for a government to be orderly and stable. Above all, with particular reference to the theme of predestination,<sup>94</sup> it underlined the iniquity and tyranny

90 See the witness “Frater Iulius” in L. Firpo, *Il processo di Giordano Bruno*, ed. D. Quaglion (Rome, Salerno, 1998), 266, but see also D. Pirillo, “Intorno all’idea di ‘giustizia misericordiosa’: Bruno e gli ‘eretici italiani’,” *Rinascimento* 42 (2002), 443–462.

91 Firpo, *Il processo*, 267.

92 Ciliberto, *Giordano Bruno*, 397. For the similarities between Bruno’s and Pucci’s life stories, see also M. Feingold, “Giordano Bruno in England, Revisited,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 67 (2004), 329–346.

93 G. Ernst, *Tommaso Campanella* (Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2002), 33. For the *Dialogo*, dedicated to Cardinal Michele Bonelli, protector of the Dominican order, cf. T. Campanella, *Dialogo politico contro i Luterani, Calvinisti e altri eretici*, in Id., *Apologia di Galileo e Dialogo politico*, ed. D. Ciampoli (Carabba, Lanciano, 1911), 83–189.

94 A few years later, in 1636, Campanella would devote a specific treaty to the topic of predestination (this one too immediately prohibited by Roman censors as a dangerous pelagian work). It is the *De praedestinatione, electione, reprobatione et auxiliis divinae gratiae cento thomisticus*, typis mandato Parisiis apud Tussanum du Bray, via Iacobaea, sub spicis

of the God of the Reformed Church, who decided at his own total discretion that “some go to Paradise and many to Hell, and that the former cannot be damned nor the latter be saved, because God works in them at His pleasure, making some act well and others wickedly, regardless of their merits of faults.”<sup>95</sup> In contrast to this capricious, deceitful God who “sets traps for them to fall into, bidding them to help each other where they cannot and to fly without giving them wings,”<sup>96</sup> Campanella proposed a God who is a merciful father to all men, who loves all his children equally and creates none to be damned: “God wants everyone to be saved [...] and [...] came to die for all and [...] does not hate *ab initio* that which He created *ab initio*.” The philosopher wrote: “Christ came to save all, universally,” and therefore, “as God is of all men, He grants sufficient grace to all without exception.”<sup>97</sup> This universally merciful God and universally valid sacrifice of Christ were essentially the God and the “benefit” that Pucci illustrated in his *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*.<sup>98</sup> It is known that the two men met in October 1594 in the Roman Holy Office prison, where Pucci had already been incarcerated for some months and Campanella was a new arrival.<sup>99</sup> Three months of intense conversation left a lasting mark on the memory of the Calabrian philosopher who, at the time of the execution of his Florentine friend and master on 5 July 1597, dedicated one of his most heartfelt sonnets to him. And it is certainly no coincidence, I would add, that Campanella recalled above all Pucci’s extraordinary familiarity with the writings of Luther and Calvin, which he had studied constantly for nearly thirty years and knew almost by heart.<sup>100</sup>

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maturis, 1636. The censures to this text were published in Campanella, *Opuscoli inediti*, ed. L. Firpo (Florence, Olschki, 1951), 145–163.

95 Campanella, *Dialogo politico*, 100; Ernst, *Tommaso Campanella*, 35; eadem, “*«Sicut amator insaniens»*. Su Pucci e Campanella,” in *Faustus Socinus and his Heritage*, ed. Lech Szczucki, Cracow, Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2005, 91–112: 96.

96 Campanella, *Dialogo politico*, 100.

97 *Ibid.*, 104; Ernst, *Tommaso Campanella*, 35–36; eadem, “*«Sicut amator insaniens»*,” 96.

98 As evidence that Campanella knew Pucci’s booklet, Germana Ernst rightly points out the comparison made by Campanella with the Book of merchants, faithfully borrowed from the *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* (Ernst, “*«Sicut amator insaniens»*,” 96–97).

99 Ernst, *Tommaso Campanella*, 31, seems to favor the latter hypothesis (see also eadem, “*«Sicut amator insaniens»*,” p. 97), where Luigi Firpo tended instead to date their meeting to Campanella’s second Roman imprisonment between March and May 1597 (see Firpo, “*Processo e morte di Francesco Pucci*,” *Rivista di filosofia* 40 (1949), 371–405: 389, now in idem, *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia*, 14–51: 33–34).

100 “Item ego loquutus sum cum Francisco Filidino haeretico, qui 28 annis servivit Lutherio et Calvinio eorumque libros memoria tenebat [et per tres menses cum eo in S. Offitio

The passionate refusal of Protestant predestination as an inescapable premise for singing the praises of the amplitude of God's kingdom was the most fertile legacy that Pucci, Bruno and Campanella had collected from nearly five decades of Italian heretical diaspora: although never explicitly named, the influence of Sebastian Castellio, Celio Secondo Curione, Bernardino Ochino in his later years and Giorgio Siculo, to cite only the most famous, can be seen in their works. However, at times the gap between the political and religious perspective of the first generation Italian heretics and late sixteenth-century exiles like Pucci and Bruno appears impossible to bridge. While the former group fled Italy at the first rumblings of the Roman Inquisition and continued their anxious search for freedom without ever looking back (except Siculo, who paid for his Nicodemite esoterism with his life), the latter group waited most of their lives for the right moment to return to their native shores. While for Castellio, Curione and Ochino, antipredestinarianism was the result of great disillusionment—the encounter with the Protestant world (from which they expected the renewal which was by now impossible in Italy) and the premise of a search for religious freedom in still more distant lands—for Pucci, Bruno and Campanella it was the prerequisite of a proposed alliance with Rome. Adriano Prosperi wrote recently that: "from Francesco Pucci and Giordano Bruno to Tommaso Campanella, the offer to the Church of Rome by the most fertile minds of an alliance was based on the rejection of the doctrines of predestination. They opposed the Reformed world with an inward religiousness that was tendentially ecumenical, indifferent to rites and ceremonies, and founded on a positive concept of the human ability to choose between good and evil, the idea of God's immense mercy and the interpretation of religious obligation on the basis of social and political cohesiveness."<sup>101</sup>

There should be no lingering doubt about the genuineness of the feelings and aspirations that guided Francesco Pucci on his tragic return journey to Rome. The decision to return to Italy was certainly not that of an unhinged madman, nor the sudden whim of a desperate individual. Instead, it satisfied a profound inner need, a deeply rooted desire to retie the thread that had snapped when he left Italy; his long-pondered decision was based on an erroneous assessment which was nonetheless sincere, namely that he was the bearer of a theological proposal that did not stray far from the legacy of doctrines that the Church had hitherto drawn on. It was a proposal that could change the fate

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conversatus sum et] hanc esse Lutheri sententiam semper audivi affirmantem;" quoted by Firpo, "Processo e morte," 33; Ernst, "«Sicut amator insaniens»," 94.

<sup>101</sup> Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande. Storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta* (Milan, Feltrinelli, 2000), 379–380.

of Christianity by offering it the destiny of peace that it deserved, a belief in the possibility of finding a favourable hearing and welcome in a Church which he imagined (and hoped) would not yet be dedicated to defending rigid doctrinal orthodoxy. Certainly, as has been pointed out, Ippolito Aldobrandini, the future Clement VIII, played a decisive role in fuelling the exiles' hopes, just as Henry IV's accession to the throne did. This is confirmed by the parallel vicissitudes of Giordano Bruno. The close relationship with France shared by Bruno and Pucci<sup>102</sup> soon became common hopes after Navarre acceded to the throne. It was in August 1591—when Gregory XIV was pope—that Bruno finally chose to return to Venice. He was convinced that "soon the world would see itself generally reformed, because it was impossible that such corruption could continue and he pinned great hopes on the King of Navarre."<sup>103</sup> With the same level of expectation as Pucci, Giordano Bruno returned to Italy, counting on the friendship between Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (a supporter of Girolamo Corbinelli) and Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, soon to be elected Pope.<sup>104</sup> He brought the manuscript of a book that he wished to dedicate to the future Clement VIII.<sup>105</sup> Following a pattern established in Toulouse and Paris, Bruno did not close any doors when he went to Venice, leaving open the extreme

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<sup>102</sup> While in Paris, where he had been living since 1585, Bruno befriended Jacopo Corbinelli and Piero Del Bene, abbot of Belleville, a member of the large, rich and famous banking family in France, to whom Bruno dedicated his *Figuratio Aristotelici physici auditus*, published in Paris in 1586. We know, moreover, of the support offered by Bruno to the conciliatory policy of Henry III. The *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* which appeared in 1584, just before Bruno arrived in Paris. It was a political pamphlet in defense of the king of France against the machinations of Spain and the League. It contained an offer of friendship and alliance to Elizabeth of England proposing that she collaborate with Henry against the common enemy, Spain. Bruno inserted this proposed alliance within an apocalyptic vision, in which the beast of evil would finally be ousted and a virtuous harmony would reign supreme. In that vision, a monarch, Henry III, was crowned with the constellation of *Corona australis*, while the *Corona borealis* would still await for some great hero-liberator. Perhaps, as Yeats wrote, in his book Bruno was anticipating a reform of the monarchy or empire led by the King of France, together with other princes; F.A. Yates, "Giordano Bruno: some new documents," in *Revue internationale de philosophie*, 16 (1951), 174–199.

<sup>103</sup> Quoted by V. Spampinato, *Documenti della vita di Giordano Bruno* (Florence, Olschki, 1933), 66; Yates, "Giordano Bruno: nuovi documenti," 134.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>105</sup> It seems, Yates wrote in this regard, that Bruno "has always truly believed that his religious and moral reform could be accommodated within the framework of Catholicism" ("Giordano Bruno. Una nota biografica," in Ead., *Giordano Bruno e la cultura europea del Rinascimento*, 108).

option of returning to the Church of Rome.<sup>106</sup> Evidence for this is provided by his idea, revealed to Brother Domenico of Nocera, to compose a work on the *Sette arti liberali* ('Seven Liberal Arts') and present it to Clement VIII in the hope of obtaining a "reading".<sup>107</sup> For Pucci and Bruno, Aldobrandini's election to the papal throne, the appointment of Francesco Patrizi to the Chair of Platonic Philosophy at the University of Rome and other acts by the newly elected Pope Clement VIII were clear signals of a change in climate;<sup>108</sup> important signals that encouraged long-standing aspirations and hopes, as we can see from Pucci's life and fortunes.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> In Paris Bruno seriously considered the possibility of returning to the ranks of the Catholic Church: "It has been about sixteen years since I last made my confession, with two exceptions, he declared to his Venetian judges, once in Toulouse before a Jesuit, and another time in Paris before another Jesuit, while I was negotiating through Monsignor the Bishop of Bergamo, then nuncio in Paris [Girolamo Ragazzoni], and Don Bernardin Mendoza [whom he had known as Spanish ambassador at the English court] about the possibility of returning to religion; with the intention of making my confession" ("Sono da sedici anni circa che io non mi sono mai presentato al confessore, eccetto due volte—avrebbe dichiarato ai giudici veneti—una volta in Tolosa da un iesuoto; et un'altra volta in Parigi a un altro iesuoto, mentre trattavo, per mezzo di monsignor Vescovo di Bergamo, allora nontio in Paris [Girolamo Ragazzoni], et di don Bernardin Mendoza [che aveva consciuto come ambasciatore spagnolo presso la corte inglese] de ritornar nella religione, con intentione di confessarmi"). The only indispensable condition on which he insisted was not to be "compelled to rejoin his order" ("astretto a ritornar nella religione"), not to have to return to the convent and put on again the Dominican habit that over the years he had learned to despise (Ciliberto, *Giordano Bruno*, 329). On Bruno's religious leanings Mocenigo would speak shortly thereafter in front of the Roman inquisitors, revealing that he had heard him say that "he liked the Catholic [religion] more than the others, but this still needed great rules" ("che la [religione] cattolica gli piacea più dell'altre, ma che ancora questa havea bisogno di gran regole"); *ibid.*, 330.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>108</sup> The Florentine origins of the new pope and his well-known Savonarolian inclinations played a significant role in nurturing Pucci's enthusiasm and hopes. Testimony of the favor with which Ippolito Aldobrandini looked upon the memory of Savonarola, but also testimony to the growing power of the Roman Inquisition is the episode of the plan concerning the correction and reprinting of Savonarola's works carried out by Clement VIII in the last years of the century, which finally failed because of obstructionism of the Holy Office; on this topic see G. Fragnito, "Girolamo Savonarola e la censura ecclesiastica," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 35 (1999), 501–529. On Clement VIII's involvement in the attempted canonization of Girolamo Savonarola at the end of the sixteenth century, see M. Gotor, *I beati del papa. Santità, Inquisizione e obbedienza in età moderna* (Florence, Olschki, 2002), 25 ff.

<sup>109</sup> It is not superfluous to recall that Pucci had personally known Ippolito Aldobrandini in Prague at the end of the 1580s. He himself said he was "received by him [...] very

Much still remains to be explored regarding the sudden change of climate that marked the transition from the first months of Aldobrandini's pontificate to the inquisitorial clampdown in 1594.<sup>110</sup> For the time being, the available documents only enable us to establish how wrong this perspective was. The extent of the utopian illusions that lay behind their expectations is clearly shown by the public burnings that ended Pucci and Bruno's adventurous lives on 5 July 1597 and 17 February 1600 respectively. Rome would not and could not accept the offer of alliance from that front. It had no need to. The ferocious anti-Protestant battle unleashed throughout Italy had now extinguished the last hotbeds of heresy and neither the Pope nor the Roman Inquisition needed troublesome allies. The only remaining issue was to find a name for this religious proposal, a reassuring category that, in accordance with established controversialist definitions, would allow them to eliminate these bothersome doctrines once and for all as pernicious repetitions of old heresies. The Inquisition documents regarding Pucci's two trials between 1594 and 1597 have not survived the many vicissitudes of the Roman archives of the Holy Office, but it is not hard to imagine that many of the charges against him closely resembled the accusations of Pelagianism made the year before by the Jesuit Nicolaus Serarius in Würzburg. Pucci's repeated efforts to explain that his doctrines had nothing to do with the ancient Pelagian heresy came to little.<sup>111</sup> More than twenty years later, when the Roman inquisitors found some of Pucci's most feared doctrines reiterated in the manuscript of *Atheismus triumphatus* ('Atheism Triumphant') by Tommaso Campanella, in some cases very faithfully, the same level of alarm permeated the secret Roman chambers. Campanella presented the possibility of achieving salvation "without sacraments" (abque sacramentis), the negation of the damnation of unbaptized infants and the idea of the sacraments as "natural symbols" (symbola naturalia) as the corollaries of a dangerous conception of Christianity as a natural religion, an idea of human reason as

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courteously" ("ricevuto da lui [...] assai umanamente"), during a visit to Prague to the then papal legate. "I think I gave [...] a good account of myself as far as you can in a short space of time" ("Credo di aver dato [...] buon saggio di me, per quanto si può in breve spazio di tempo"), Pucci commented in a letter to his brother Giovanni (Pucci, *Lettere*, 1, 104–106: 105). On Ippolito Aldobrandini's legation to Poland, during which he encountered Pucci in Prague, and the role of intermediary played by Emilio Pucci, then Commander of Malta, see J.W. Wos, "La legazione diplomatica in Polonia del cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini in una lettera di Emilio Pucci," *Rinascimento* 10 (1970), 219–234.

<sup>110</sup> On this issue, see Gigliola Fragnito's observations on the increasing power of Holy Office, more and more conditioning Clement VIII's choices; *Proibito capire. Chiesa e volgare nella prima età moderna* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 2005).

<sup>111</sup> Cf., for example, Pucci, *Efficacia salvifica*, 70.

a sufficient element to achieve eternal salvation. Indeed, they were doctrines that the Calabrian monk had begun to develop after his intense discussions with Pucci in the Roman prison in the mid-1590s.

The Roman inquisitors condemned these doctrines—the affirmation of religion as something *indita* (innate) in the human heart and a *virtus naturalis* (natural virtue), the accompanying boundless extension of the confines of eternal salvation and the resulting reduction, almost to the point of cancellation, of the limits between Christianity and other faiths—as dangerous reiterations of Pelagius's heresy,<sup>112</sup> thus using the same controversialist categories used by the Jesuit theologian Serarius to stigmatize Pucci's theological propositions in 1593. What Pucci and Campanella (and to a certain extent Bruno) actually suggested was something very different from a mere reiteration of the Pelagian heresy, something much more corrosive than the ideas of St Augustine's old adversary. They probably also had no clear idea of how radical their proposal was, as their offer of an alliance with Rome was sincere and genuine. However, as François du Jon and Lukas Osiander suggested, the idea of a natural faith that was implicit in their writings risked undermining the very essence of Christianity, paving the way for its dissolution and opening the floodgates to the Europe of Baruch Spinoza and Pierre Bayle.

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<sup>112</sup> On the censures of Campanella's *Atheismus* and more generally on the inquisitorial history of this text, see G. Ernst, "Cristianesimo e religione naturale. Le censure all'«Atheismus triumphatus» di Tommaso Campanella," *Nouvelles de la République des lettres* (1989), 137–200; eadem, "Il ritrovato «Apologeticum» di Campanella al Bellarmino in difesa della religione naturale," *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 47 (1992), 565–586; eadem, "Introduzione," to Tommaso Campanella, *L'Ateismo trionfato, ovvero Riconoscimento filosofico della religione universale contra l'anticristianesimo macchiavellesco*, 2 vols., edizione del testo inedito a cura di G. Ernst (Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2004), VII–LV: XXXVII ff. For Campanella's answers to the censures made to the printed version of the work in 1630, see Campanella, *Opuscoli inediti*, 7–54.

# Epilogue

While the publication of *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* in Leiden triggered a hostile response from polemicists from different religious confessions, steps were taken in Rome to arrest and bring its author to trial, as he was increasingly seen as an unrepentant heretic. Predictably, the two long letters sent to Rome from Frankfurt in 1591 had rekindled inquisitorial suspicions about him after a number of years. After being passed on to members of the Congregation of the Index and the Holy Office by Cardinal Nephew Paolo Camillo Sfondrati, they contributed—perhaps decisively—to the decision to include Pucci's name as a 'first class' author in the Index (12 December 1592) and launch inquisitorial proceedings against him. Furthermore, the Florentine Inquisitor had presented a formal denunciation shortly before on 3 October, drawing the attention of the Roman Congregation to Pucci "who fled to the heretics in Germany"<sup>1</sup> and enclosing a manuscript book, probably a copy of *De regno Christi*. The information network set up by Rome went straight into action; on 22 October 1592, Ottavio Mirto Frangipani, the Bishop of Tricarico and Nuncio of Cologne, informed Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini of the "books" ("pieghi") that a "certain Francesco Pucci, a Florentine" ("tal Francesco Pucci fiorentino") had sent from Holland "with two other similar packages for me and the University of Cologne".<sup>2</sup> Together with the parcel, Frangipani started to send Rome information collected by Catholic emissaries in the Low Countries, above all the Apostolic Vicar Sasbout Vosmeer. Frangipani explained that Pucci had reached Frankfurt and then travelled to Nuremberg, "with a rumour that he would move on to Italy from there" ("con voce di passar per di lì alla volta d'Italia").<sup>3</sup> On 7 November, Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro asked for information about ascertaining the authorship of the volume sent by Frangipani and the possible existence of "other documentation [...] for which more action could be taken".<sup>4</sup> On 14 November, Cinzio Aldobrandini confirmed that the matter was seen

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<sup>1</sup> "Qui aufugit ad haereticos in Germaniam"; L. Firpo, 'Processo e morte di Francesco Pucci,' in 1996, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> "Con duo altri simili per me et per quest'Università di Colonia"; letter from Ottavio Mirto Frangipane to Cinzio Aldobrandini, Cologne, 22 October 1592, in von B. Roberg, *Nuntiaturberichte Aus Deutschland, Die Kölner Nuntiatur*, band III, 3, (München-Paderborn-Wien, Schöningh, 1971), 94–97; Paolo Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia nel Cinquecento*, 55 and 143–144.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup> "Altri atti [...] per li quali si potesse procedere più oltre"; L. Firpo, "Processo e condanna," 23.

as extremely important in Rome: in reply to Frangipani, he thanked him for the information received and added that proceedings in Rome would involve “thinking about appropriate steps and observing the moves” made by Pucci. As Aldobrandini felt that he would probably retreat to the Low Countries again, he asked the Nuncio to make the Electoral Prince and Archbishop of Cologne Ernest of Bavaria aware of the situation, so that he could “get his hands on him” if Pucci passed through Cologne.<sup>5</sup> Only after an arrest had been made would it be possible to consider “his merits” (“suoi meriti”) more thoroughly. Frangipani replied from Cologne on 3 December, reassuring him that he would inform Rome about any news regarding the Florentine exile. In the meantime, on 16 November, the Congregation of the Holy Office had decided to address the Pucci case at a subsequent session in the presence of the Pope. The decision was also taken to involve the Nuncio resident in Prague at the Imperial Court—the Bishop of Cremona, Cesare Speciano—in the process of collecting information. Speciano responded to the requests from Rome on 1 December by writing to Cinzio Aldobrandini about *De Christi servatoris efficacitate* and the letter that Pucci had enclosed with the volume, specifying that the theologian in his entourage had noticed “fifty heresies, all of them condemned.”<sup>6</sup> This was Giampaolo Nazari, a Dominican from Cremona, who had published a work about the nature of imperial power dedicated to Rudolf II (*Imperialis regalisque maiestatis regimen*, 1593) with the support of Speciano. After an interim meeting on 5 December, in which the case was discussed together with that of the Neoplatonist Francesco Patrizi, the Congregation of the Index met on 12 December and decided, “by order of the Pope and the Congregation of the Inquisition” (“ex ordine Sanctissimi et Congregationis S. Officii”), to include the Florentine’s *opera omnia* among the ‘first class’ texts in the Index.

Meanwhile, after leaving Nuremberg, Pucci had been involved in an accident near Salzburg in the last week of November, when the coach in which he was travelling overturned. Confined to bed with his left leg “destroyed” (“demolita”) and his “knee injured” (“ginocchio scommesso”), he was taken in and looked after at “the house of a barber, considered an extremely good surgeon”, probably

5 “Pensando a ciò che convenga et osservando i passi;” “li metesse la mano addosso;” letter from Cinzio Aldobrandini to Ottavio Mirto Frangipane, Rome, 14 November 1592, in Roberg, *Nuntiaturberichte*, 111–112; P. Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 59 and 145.

6 Letter from Cesare Speciano to Cinzio Aldobrandini, Prague, 1 December 1592, in N. Mosconi, ed. by, *La nunziatura di Praga di Cesare Speciano (1592–1598)*, 1 (Brescia, Morcelliana, 1966–1967), 250–254; P. Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 74 and 155–156.

a relative of the archbishop and prince of the city, Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau.<sup>7</sup> On 8 January 1593, Pucci was still an invalid and could barely manage to take a few steps in his bedroom “with support and was extremely weak”. The letter sent to von Raitenau “from bed” (ex lectulo) on 12 December soon reached the Secretary of State in Rome. In this way, after a few weeks, on 30 January, Aldobrandini wrote to Speciano about Pucci’s accident, adding that he had given Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in Innsbruck precise instructions, by way of the Nuncio in Graz, Gerolamo Porcia, to provide Pucci with treatment, but had also urged him not to “let him travel as he wishes.”<sup>8</sup> Pucci was effectively in custody. Speciano also wrote to Porcia in person “to make sure that he does not go anywhere else when he is better, so that he can be sent to Rome,” receiving further reassurances from Rome shortly afterwards about the fact that “as soon as the news was received that Pucci was ill in Salzburg, a messenger was sent for the purpose of keeping him under control, and this messenger will not let him escape, sending a weekly update to Rome.”<sup>9</sup> Pucci was aware of his state of imprisonment. As we learn from a letter that Speciano sent to Aldobrandini on 30 March 1593, he had written about it to D’Ancel (in a lost letter), telling him “that he was unhappy that he had not followed his advice when he [D’Ancel] was dissuading him from going to Rome.”<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, he had not definitively given up hope; during the same weeks, he entrusted the young man travelling with him, Cornelius of Renoi, with a final desperate mission to go to Rome with a letter and a copy of his most important writings to pave the way for his arrival. However, while Cornelius was on his way to Rome, the negotiations for the consignment of the prisoner were in full swing. On his arrival in Salzburg, Speciano wrote to Aldobrandini on 29 July to inform him of the suggestions for completing the arrest put forward by the Archbishop: “He can think of

7 L. Firpo, *Gli scritti di Francesco Pucci*, 147–148; idem, ‘Processo e condanna a morte,’ 17; P. Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 80.

8 “Lo lasciasse mettere in viaggio così a voglia sua,” letter from Cinzio Aldobrandini to Cesare Speciano, Rome, January 30, 1593, in Mosconi, *La nunziatura di Praga di Cesare Speciano*, II, 92–93; P. Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 83 and 172–174.

9 “Che si assicuri della persona, acciò, quando sarà guarito, non vadi altrove per mandarlo poi a Roma”; “sendosi udito ch’era caduto infermo a Salzburg, si spedì coriero a posta a farlo ritenere, come è seguito, né uscirà dalle mani senza render conto di settimana;” letter from Cinzio Aldobrandini to Cesare Speciano, Rome, February 20, 1593, in Mosconi, *La nunziatura di Praga di Cesare Speciano*, II, 100–101; Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 183.

10 “Che si trova mal contento di non aver seguitato il consiglio suo quando lo dissuadeva di non andare a Roma;” letter from Cesare Speciano to Cinzio Aldobrandini, Prague, March 30 1593, in Mosconi, *La nunziatura di Praga di Cesare Speciano*, III, 132–135; Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 87 and 195–199.

no better solution than sending Pucci to Innsbruck, after first informing the Archduke so that he can send someone to pick him up at the border of his dukedom. From here it will be easy to send Pucci to Innsbruck and then transfer him first to Bolzano and then to Verona along the river.”<sup>11</sup> The plan agreed with Raitenau probably came to fruition. On 2 February 1594, Pucci was staying “in prison” at Buonconsiglio Castle in Trent with Prince-Bishop Ludovico Madruzzo, who had been given custody of him by Archduke Ferdinand. A letter from Aldobrandini to Madruzzo suggests that he was then probably sent to Verona, before being transferred to Rome. The active phase of his trial started on 27 May 1594, presumably shortly after his transfer to the Roman prisons. On 14 July 1594, the Congregation issued its customary exhortation to proceed in the inquisitorial trial (“procedatur ad ulteriora in causa”), which usually marked the start of the final defence of the investigation, insisting that the verdict should be reached soon. The records of the inquisitorial process have not survived, but a substantial number of letters and documents found by Luigi Firpo allow us to follow the main stages.<sup>12</sup> Until Pucci was arrested and taken to the Roman prisons, the inquisitors had limited themselves to dealing with two questions of an ancillary nature. The first of these was the seizure of the heretic’s Florentine assets with a view to the confiscation that inevitably accompanied every conviction. The second was the precise classification of the defendant’s lineage, following protests from the noble Pucci family, who boasted three cardinals in the XVI century and wanted to reject all kinship ties with a man who was dishonouring the family’s good name. This second matter was resolved by Pope Clement VIII in a decree of September 1595, which established that the person under investigation Francesco d’Antonio Dini, who called himself “Franciscus Puccius Filidinus” on the front of his printed books, must instead be designated “De Dinis” on Holy Office documents, along with the specification “who falsely called himself de’ Pucci.”<sup>13</sup> The trial started officially in July 1594, but soon came to a standstill for reasons that are unknown to us and Pucci was held in prison for two years in conditions that were not uncomfortable. It was during this period that he also had the opportunity to

<sup>11</sup> “A lui non soviene meglior modo che mandarlo a Ispruch prevenendo prima quel Serenissimo arciduca che mandi ai confini a pigliarlo, ove di qua sarà mandato et con pochissima fatica si potrà inviare a Bolzano et poi a Verona per il fiume;” letter from Cesare Speciano to Cinzio Aldobrandini, Salzburg, July 29, 1593, in *Carta, Nunziature ed eresia*, 90 and 200–203.

<sup>12</sup> Luigi Firpo, “Processo e morte di Francesco Pucci.”

<sup>13</sup> “Qui se falso denominare faciebat de Puccis;” L. Firpo, “Processo e morte,” 25.

have philosophical conversations with the young Tommaso Campanella.<sup>14</sup> The main question addressed by the Holy Office at the time was still the prisoner's assets; the trial started again in the spring of 1596. Pucci was not only accused of heresy, but also of appearing to be unrepentant after having been declared a formal heretic in the past (after all, he had abjured his heresies in Prague in the mid-1580s). There was a radical difference in Holy Office procedure between a first-time heretic, who could, with repentance and abjuration, attain his freedom, and he who formally repeated the error after already having abjured. This *relapsus* could repent a second time and be allowed to atone 'in foro interiore', but no longer deserved to be readmitted into the Church, from which he had strayed on two occasions. For this reason, he was inevitably given the death penalty just like an unrepentant pertinacious heretic. In December 1596, Pucci was invited to abjure again to save his soul and escape the stake that was established for *relapsi*. After refusing to do this, he was handed over to the secular arm (as an obstinate and unrepentant heretic), continuing to be "inflexible in his refusal to recognize the error of his ways."<sup>15</sup> "for being obstinate in his heresy he will be burnt alive," according to an anonymous announcement received by Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, a Greek scholar from Padua. Pucci only yielded when faced with being burned at the stake and consequently had "his head cut off in the Tor di Nona prison"<sup>16</sup> on 5 July 1597.

While Rome betrayed Pucci's hopes and reserved a tragic destiny for him, the fate that the Reformed authorities had in store for him was not much more joyous. The alarm signal launched by du Jon and Osiander was taken up and magnified by many Protestant controversialists in the following decades. In 1594, when Pucci was still languishing in the Roman prisons awaiting trial by the Inquisition, his name was invoked by Aegidius Hunnius, a Lutheran theologian who was a follower of Johannes Brenz, involved alongside Polycarp Leyser and Salomon Gessner in a bitter polemic against Samuel Huber, the author of the *Theses Christum Iesum esse mortuum pro peccatis totius generis humanis* (Tübingen, 1590), a text which, as we have seen, Pucci had read and appreciated in its second edition of 1592.<sup>17</sup> Hunnius accused Huber of repeating the

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *supra*.

<sup>15</sup> "Inflessibile nel rifiuto di riconoscere il proprio errore;" Pucci, *Lettere*, 2, 23–24.

<sup>16</sup> "Per stare ostinato nella sua heresia sarà abbraggiato vivo;" "la testa mozza nelle carceri di Tor di Nona;" Rome, July 12, 1597; Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*, 98 and 217.

<sup>17</sup> The text in which Hunnius formulates his accusation against Huber is the *Controversia inter theologos wittenbergenses de regeneratione et electione dilucida explicatio D. Aegidii Hunni, Polycarpi Leyseri, Salomonis Gesneri, etc. cum refutatione argumentorum quae*

doctrines that Pucci had spread in his *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*, above all the doctrine of the universal salvation of all men. To summarize his accusations, Hunnius coined the term 'Puccianism'. Like the most famous theologians of the time, from Faustus Socinus to Jacob Arminius and Juan de Valdés, indicated by their opponents as the redoubtable forefathers of heretical traditions that needed to be fought (Socinianism, Arminianism, Valdesianism), Pucci's name and religious profile also dissolved into the abstract forms of a controversialist category that was destined to have a reasonable level of success in the following century. Indeed, the term 'Puccianism' appears several times during the seventeenth century in the field of European anti-Spinozist literature, used in controversialist terms by many opponents of naturalism and rationalism: in the second half of the century, it appears in a work by Abraham Calovius (1612–1686), a theologian from Wittemberg and a leading exponent of Lutheran scholasticism, while at the end of the century, the term is used in a history of naturalism by Adam Tribbechovius (1641–1687). In the following century, it appears in a volume by Johann Georg Walch (1693–1775), a professor of theology in Jena, who compared Pucci's doctrines to those of Edward Herbert.<sup>18</sup> The term is always used by these authors with the same meaning: they identify the doctrine of Pucci and his presumed followers with the idea of the universal salvation of humankind. The accusation of Puccianism was also highly topical in Leipzig at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when theologians at the local university were involved in a dispute about the redemptive effectiveness of grace. The Protestant theologian Thomas Ittig even took on the task of writing the history of Puccianism, the school of thought and the controversialist category that Pucci had inspired, before dedicating himself to a partial reconstruction of Pucci's life story. *Dissertatio de puccianismo* was the title of Ittig's work, in which he accused his Faculty opponents of doing no more than faithfully repeating the Florentine exile's doctrines when they

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D. Samuel Huberus pro assertione suaे opinionis hactenus in medium attulit. Studio et opera hominis pietatis, veritatis et tranquillitatis. Ecclesiae studiosi in lucem edita, excusum anno domini 1594, Johan. Spiess., Francofurti; cf. M. Biagioni, "Prospettive di ricerca su Francesco Pucci," 150.

<sup>18</sup> Abraham Calovius, *Systema locorum heologicorum e sacra potissimum Scriptura et antiquitate neconon adversariorum confessione*, Vitbergae, sumptibus A. Harmtmanni, 1655–1677, I, 123; Adam Tribbechovius, *Historia naturalismi a prima sua origine ad nostra usque tempora per suas classes deducta*, Jena, C. Krebsii, 1700, pp. 47 et seq.; Johann Georg Walch, *Historische um theologische Einleitung in die Religionsstreitigkeiten der Evangelisch-Lutherischen kirche*, Jena, 1733; M. Biagioni, "Prospettive di ricerca," 151.

defended Latitudinarian positions with regard to otherworldly salvation.<sup>19</sup> The debate continued over the following years, when Johannes Schmid entitled his short treatise in Latin *Puccium in naturalistis et indifferentistis redivivum*, defining Puccianism as a theory according to which “all men can obtain salvation within their religion.”<sup>20</sup> The treatise was divided into four chapters dedicated to a brief biography of Pucci, his doctrines, those who had recently revived his ideas and a confutation of his doctrines. Schmid classed Pucci alongside men such as Jean Bodin, “who is comparable to Pucci also due to the fact that like Pucci he moved from one religion to another”, Edward Herbert, Baruch Spinoza, Courcelles, van Limborch and Barclaius.<sup>21</sup> The author of this text was driven by the desire to condemn all form of religious radicalism, above all Spinozism and deism, and Pucci was identified as the forefather of the hated “naturalists” (“naturalisti”), “who deny that divine revelation is necessary, but rather think that natural knowledge of God, inscribed in the hearts of everyone, is sufficient to obtain eternal salvation”<sup>22</sup>

Pelagianism and Puccianism were therefore the two controversialist categories with which Catholics and Protestants respectively branded Pucci’s doctrines as dangerous attempts to undermine the foundations of Christianity. Like all controversialist categories, these two also simplified and partly distorted the sense of the doctrines they referred to. The job of the historian is not, however, to judge the validity of the accusations implicit in the use of such categories, but to understand the historical importance that the use of such categories attributes to Pucci and his religious proposal. The historian must aim to move beyond the layer of controversy and understand what lay hidden behind the accusations by taking them as a starting point to reconstruct the historical, religious, intellectual and cultural contexts that formed the backdrop to the religious controversies featuring Francesco Pucci. This has been the aim of the preceding pages.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Ittig stated that his *Dissertatio de puccianismo* was an introduction to the work by his colleague Christian Reineccius, *Bosianismus per responsa et testimonia theologorum condemnatus*, printed in Leipzig in 1704.

<sup>20</sup> “Tutti gli uomini possono conseguire la propria salvezza all’interno della propria religione;” Johann Schmid, *Puccium in naturalistis et indifferentistis redivivum*, Lipsiae, 1712, 44. On this work, cf. Biagioni, “Prospettive di ricerca,” 152; and A. Rotondò, “Nuove testimonianze,” 273.

<sup>21</sup> “Qui sicuti in eo cum Puccio bene convenit, quod ab una ad alteram transierit religionem;” *ibid.*, 45 et seq.

<sup>22</sup> “Qui revelationem divinam [...] necessariam esse inficiantur, sed notitiam Dei naturalem omnium cordibus inscriptam ad salutem consequendam sufficere existimant;” *ibid.*, 17.

## Conclusion: An Italian Heresy

After reconstructing the main stages of the intellectual biography of Francesco Pucci against the backdrop of sixteenth-century Europe and analysing his works, above all the controversies that these writings originated from, the historical contexts in which Pucci found himself, the network of friends and contacts that he established and the often violent reactions that his proposals triggered among many leading figures in the religious scene at the time, we can now fully assess the importance of his story for the intellectual and religious history of the Early Modern Age. The in-depth study conducted above about the Italian roots of his exile, his reading and the intellectual circles he frequented before deciding to leave the peninsula definitively has highlighted the wide range of religious and intellectual traditions that helped influence his religious formation and thinking: from the Florentine Neoplatonism inspired by the work of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico to the Savonarolan prophetic tradition, by way of Erasmus's lesson on infinite divine mercy, a reading of *The Benefit of Christ Crucified* and the theorization and practice of religious Nicodemism by religious minorities crushed by pervasive inquisitorial activity. In my opinion, Pucci is an exemplary product of the Italian Renaissance and the so-called Italian Reformation. The decades in which his religious and cultural education took place were profoundly marked by the religious schism caused by the Protestant Reformation. The spread of Protestant doctrines in Italy did not result in the simple uncritical adoption of Reformed ideas; they penetrated the peninsula in an extensive and pervasive way, and the action taken by the Inquisition to repress them and stamp them out was slow and problematic. It should be specified, however, that the abundance of cultural and intellectual traditions of which the Italian Renaissance was an expression had a decisive influence on the character that the doctrines assumed after reaching Italy. There were naturally groups of men (defined to different degrees) whose ideas could easily be identified with the doctrines of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Bucer or Valdés. However, if we observe the religious profile of the main secular and ecclesiastical exponents of the so-called Italian Reformation—from the scholar Marcantonio Flaminio to the Protonotary Apostolic Pietro Carnesecchi, from Cardinal Gasparo Contarini to Cardinal Reginald Pole, from the Benedictine prophet Giorgio Siculo to the Capuchin preacher Bernardino Ochino—or focus on the content of the most emblematic text of the Italian Reformation, the bestseller *The Benefit of Christ Crucified* (1543), it is easy to see that they express an original doctrinal mix that cannot be exclusively attributed to Lutheranism, Calvinism or Valdesianism. Historiography in Italy and

elsewhere has too often focused on demonstrating the prevalence of one or another master of the Reformation in the religious and spiritual formation of sixteenth-century Italian men and women and in the content of books that circulated in the Italian peninsula in the middle of the century. It is certainly true that elements such as the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone and harsh anti-clerical criticism were widely accepted by those who endorsed doctrines from across the Alps. However, as this endorsement was filtered through a multitude of cultural and religious traditions that had become a part of the Italian social fabric, the results were often not faithful to the original Reformed message. A representative example is the concept of divine predestination and the devaluation of human free will that it implied: as the Italian peninsula was still profoundly steeped in humanistic values, it was harshly criticized and eventually rejected outright.

Figures such as Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Girolamo Savonarola, Erasmus of Rotterdam and Francesco Zorzi—together with religious traditions that were deep-rooted in the history of the Italian peninsula like those of the Benedictines and Franciscans—left a profound mark on the religious fabric of sixteenth-century Italy and acted as the filter through which Protestant doctrines were received and often thoroughly reworked. Through the figure of Francesco Pucci, with his polemical clashes and doctrinal controversies, it is possible to observe the ways in which the ‘Italian Reformation’ interacted with the confessional Churches in sixteenth-century Europe, carving out a fully independent space between Rome and Geneva. In the name of the multiplicity of traditions assimilated during the years of his religious formation, during his long European peregrination Pucci made himself the messenger of a ‘third way’ that could not be reduced to the head-on clash between the Church of Rome and the Reformed Churches in the mid-sixteenth century. In a Europe split between the religion of sacraments and works, and the religion of divine predestination, Pucci made his choice and coherently pursued a radically alternative proposal based on faith in God reduced to its essential content and deep-rooted confidence in infinite divine mercy towards all men. He attracted the hostility of the Catholic authorities by stubbornly pursuing his anti-Roman polemic against corruption, the immorality of ‘ecclesiastics’ and the tyranny of the papacy, and fell foul of the Protestant authorities as a result of his anti-predestinarian battle. The analysis conducted in this volume regarding the many controversies that he undertook in major European cities has given us the opportunity to assess to what extent the model of confession-alization that was gaining strength all over Europe was questioned by a hardened minority of intellectuals and men of faith who were not resigned to a Europe built around immovable ecclesiastical hierarchies and untouchable

religious dogmas. More specifically, it has allowed us to observe the contribution that the 'Italian Reformation' made to the movement opposing the phenomenon of religious confessionalization in sixteenth-century Europe. The case of Giacomo Aconcio was one of many that were similar to that of Francesco Pucci. This notary from Trent received his religious formation in Italy in the 1530s and 1540s in the service of Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo and then for a few years in Vienna with Archduke Maximilian, the son of Emperor Ferdinand I. He left the Italian peninsula in 1557, escaping to Basle, Zurich and Strasbourg, before deciding to cross the sea to England at the end of 1559. His masterpiece was a work entitled *Devil's Stratagems*, published for the first time in Basle by Pietro Perna in 1565 and then reprinted many times in different languages in the following decades and in the next century. *Devil's Stratagems* is a strongly anti-Roman work, but at the same time it is truly critical of certain behaviour that Aconcio frequently noticed among the Reformed Churches in London. He argued in particular that many of these Churches had abandoned the original message of evangelical freedom spread by Luther in the first phase of his battle against Rome. By now, though, Aconcio felt profoundly uncomfortable with what he perceived as a clear betrayal of that spirit and those original ideals. The confession of faith that many Churches required from their members, along with the expulsions or the punishments of those among them who did not conform to the rules and doctrines of the Church, were vivid examples of what Aconcio regarded as a despicable attitude. Aconcio's volume faithfully reflects his profound impatience and the solution that he proposed was a radical one, reducing the truths of faith to a few essential shared principles. Following the steps of great men of letters such as Erasmus of Rotterdam, Sebastian Castellio and Bernardino Ochino, Aconcio stated that a true Christian only needed to believe in the existence of God and the eternal salvation granted by the benefit of Christ through his sacrifice on the Cross. Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Puritans and all other religious confessions should agree on a very simple and essential credo, leaving their doctrinal differences and religious divisions to one side. For Aconcio, there were only a very few fundamental teachings in Christianity, derived directly from the plain meaning of the New Testament; as everything else could be accepted or rejected, any disagreement should be conducted mildly, acknowledging that either or indeed both sides might have a case—or might be wrong. The centrality of the benefit of Christ, the infinite mercy of God and the reduction to the essential principles of faith needed to achieve salvation were the main doctrinal principles that Aconcio exported from 1540s Italy to the heart of Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century. Like Francesco Pucci, Giacomo Aconcio also developed a religious proposal rooted in Italy in the first half of

the sixteenth century in the climate that he had experienced and the reading that had guided his decision to leave the Italian peninsula. In a similar way to Pucci's experience, the content of his proposal was judged with hostility by both sides of the religious divide. His *opera omnia* were included in the Clementine Index of 1596, condemned as heretical and dangerous writings by the Catholic authorities; in the same way, a few decades later his *Devil's Stratagems*, repeatedly published in England first in Latin and then in an English translation, was subjected to Protestant censorship during the first English revolution, held up by the Presbyterian minister Francis Cheynell as a dangerous 'Socinian' work that undermined the foundations of the Protestant Churches and doctrine.<sup>1</sup> These doctrines—that we have learned to identify as typical expressions of an Italian Reformation, or an Italian religiosity at the time of the Reformation—were at the centre of fundamental works of the European Reformation such as *De amplitudine regni Dei* by Celio Secondo Curione from Piedmont, the *Epistola alli cittadini di Riva di Trento* by the Sicilian monk Giorgio Siculo or the *Dialogi Triginta* by the former General of the Capuchins Bernardino Ochino from Siena. It is no coincidence that all of these works were subjected to hostility from both Catholics and Protestants. The intellectual biography and work of Francesco Pucci is therefore part of a long tradition of heretical writings that were censored by Catholics and Protestants alike. There was the sensational case of the arrest and burning at the stake of the Antitrinitarian Michel Servetus, which saw the Roman Inquisition collaborate with the authorities in Geneva in 1553.<sup>2</sup> This confirmed that there had been a convergence of objectives between the repressive institutions of both religions, something that had already emerged two years before in the case of the heretic Giorgio Siculo (who was burned at the stake in Ferrara in 1551).<sup>3</sup> Then there were the cases of Sebastian Castellio from Savoy, who escaped the Roman and Spanish Inquisition only to suffer violent attacks even in tolerant Basle,<sup>4</sup> and Celio Secondo Curione, who moved away from Italy after hiding his doctrines for a long time, was tried and convicted in Stuttgart

<sup>1</sup> On Giacomo Aconio and the hostility to which his works were subjected, see G. Caravale, *Storia di una doppia censura. Gli Stratagemmi di Satana di Giacomo Aconio nell'Europa del Seicento* (Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> On Serveto and his arrest, see at least the work by R. Bainton, recently available to Italian readers for the first time with an introduction by A. Prosperi: *Vita e morte di Michele Serveto* (Rome, Fazi editore, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> On the death of Giorgio Siculo and the collaboration between the two 'inquisitions', cf. A. Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro grande. Storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta*, (Feltrinelli, Milan 2000), 191–233.

<sup>4</sup> Regarding him, see the cited volume by H.R. Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio*, esp. 170–209.

after the publication of his work on the amplitude of divine mercy and was only eventually freed from Protestant accusations thanks to his Nicodemite skills. There was also the case of Bernardino Ochino, the former General of the Order of Capuchins, who fled the Italian peninsula in 1542, but was banished by the Town Council of Zurich, where he had taken refuge, following the publication of his *Thirty Dialogues*.<sup>5</sup> This tradition finally brings us to Tommaso Campanella, who was repeatedly censored and tried by the Holy Office in Italy and also drew significant censorious attention from the Protestants in the early seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup>

By following the lives of these authors and their writings, the early modern historian can identify a leitmotif that links their names to the assertion of themes and doctrines that were destined, at the height of the age of confessionalization, to sow the seeds of religious tolerance and freedom that only flourished in the second half of the seventeenth century, offering the eighteenth-century *res publica litterarum* the theoretical basis for building an Enlightenment society that was open to religious diversity and hostile to inquisitorial repression.

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5 See the pages dedicated to this question in the dated, but still valid monograph by R. Bainton, *Bernardino Ochino. Esule e riformatore senese del Cinquecento 1487–1563* (Florence, Sansoni, 1940), but cf. above all the more recent M. Taplin, *The Italian Reformers and the Zurich Church, c. 1540–1620*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003), 111–169.

6 On Campanella and the Catholic printing censorship against him, cf. G. Ernst, “Cristianesimo e religione naturale. Le censure all’ ‘Atheismus triumphatus’ di Tommaso Campanella,” in *Nouvelles de la République des lettres*, 1989, 1–II, 137–200, as well as the censorship against *De praedestinatione, electione, reprobatione et auxiliis divinae gratiae cento thomisticus* (typis mandato Parisiis apud Tussanum du Bray, via Iacobaea, sub spicis maturis, 1636) published in T. Campanella, *Opuscoli inediti*, ed. by L. Firpo (Florence, Olschki 1951), 145–163, and the renowned essay by L. Firpo, “Filosofia italiana e controriforma. III: La proibizione delle opere del Campanella,” *Rivista di filosofia*, 41, 1950, 390–401.



# Appendix 1

*Informatione di Francesco Pucci all'Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Monsignore l'arcivescovo di Bari nuntio apostolico a Sua Maestà cesarea sopra i ss. Giovanni Dee et Eduardo Kelleo inglese.<sup>1</sup>*

(ASF, Mediceo del Principato 4185, cc. 286r–287r)

286r / Il signor Giovanni Dee, nato l'anno 1527 in Ing[hilter]ra assai nobilmente, et d'honeste facultà patrimoniali fornito, fino dalla prima sua gioventù, tanto profitò nelle lettere latine et greche, nella philosophia et nelle leggi, et particolarmente in tutte le principali scienze matematiche, che egli ne fu pubblico professore in Inghilterra et a Parigi, con gran corso et lode, et havendo poi scritti molti libri, ha mandata la fama di sé per tutta Europa. E' vissuto sempre catholicamente ma come philosopho, hora peregrinando per diverse contade di christianità, hora ritirato fra i suoi libri et lambicchi, come quello che da 28 anni in qua, si è dilettato molto delle distillationi, attendo a scoprire i secreti di natura, che mediante il fuoco si palesano, et è stato tenuto che egli intenda in questo, et in tutto l'artifitio della quinta essenza, secreti mirabili, si come ne tiene libri e scritti molto rari, in lingua greca latina, tedesca italiana, et francese, le quali tutte egli intende et parla ragionevolmente, oltr'alla sua inglese, nella quale egli è molto eloquente. Ma questi studii non l'hanno però tanto occupato che non habbia anco atteso alle sacre lettere, nelle quali egli è detto al pari di molti gran theologi, et particolarmente fa professione di intendersi de' sensi cabalistici. Non di meno da 20 anni in qua, non ha trovato in cosa alcuna tanta sodisfattione, quanto nella semplice et fervente oratione a Dio, nel qual santo esercitio è stato tanto felice, che il signore di è degnato, mediante i santi angeli suoi, rivelargli molti et gran misterii appartenenti alla fine del mondo, et alla rinovatione del secolo. Le quali cose, se ben da lui non erano publicate, non passavano però tanto secrete, che non lo rendessero risguardevole a buoni, et per consequenza odiato da quelli heretici, i quali hanno sovrana autorità in Inghilterra et delle arti magiche si aiutano a spiare i consigli de' prencipi et a governare quel regno. Questi avversari suoi dunque, circa 6 anni fa mandarono ad aspettarlo, a fine di tirarlo dalla parte loro, o di beffarlo, il signor Eduardo Kelleo, giovane allhora di 25 anni, incirca, et favoritissimo in corte, per la scienza delle cose magiche; per tentarlo mediante questo mago et fargli perdere la riputatione che egli haveva appresso a molti di eccellente dottrina et d'havere familiarità con gli angeli eletti. Havendo dunque questi due conferito insieme de' secreti delle cose soprannatu-

<sup>1</sup> The document is probably an autograph manuscript and is not dated. The date 1599, which appears in the top left-hand corner of the first folio (f. 286r), was added by a later hand and clearly does not relate to the drafting of the document.

rali et spirituali, il signor Dee invita il Kelleo nel suo oratorio, et mettesi a fare oratione per esser liberato dalle male tentationi, et per seguire la divina luce et verità; et allhora cominciano ad apparire et parlare al Kelleo gli angoli santi, i quali dichiarano in inglese come la volontà di Dio è che essi habbiano communicatione con esse angeliche creature, et odono i secreti delle gran cose che si deono vedere al mondo, et discorregli sopra molte particolarità, così appartenenti a loro due come al publico. Il Kelleo restando stupito dalla luce et dottrina d'altra qualità et natura, che non haveva infino allhora sentita, si parte mezzo confuso et quasi preso, ma confidando molto nel suo sapere, et havendo gli spiriti folletti ad ogni suo comandamento si trovò da quelli molto tentato et distolto dalla pratica con il S. Dee et con gli angoli suoi. Pure havendo quelle visioni fatto in lui alcuna buona impressione, tornava sovente al compagno a vedere et udire quello era significatogli da alto, et sentiva propositi et sentenze di sentimento soprahumano, et ogni giorno era più mosso ad ascoltare gli spiriti celesti, et abbandonare gli altri, ma non senza grandissimi contrasti et battaglie. Il S. Dee sopportava la fierezza et inconstanza del giovane, perché nei primi giorni fu promessogli che ne havrebbe vittoria, con la sua patienza, et che costui saria più fervente di lui nella opera del signore. Così sene stettero contrastando in Inghilterra infino all'anno 1582, nel qual tempo furono chiamati a peregrinare, per la Polonia, et per la Germania, et passarono il mare, non senza grandissima tempesta, dalla quale furono liberati da Michele et Gabriele angeli, apparitigli a punto quando stava per rompersi la loro nave, et le vicine erano volte, et preso posto in Frisia, sene vennero in Polonia. Qui havendo soggiornato qualche tempo, io che vivevo in Cracovia con grande inquietudine d'animo, non havendo trovato in 14 anni di peregrinatione, chiesa in cui potessi riposarmi, cominciai a conoscere il Dee, ma non mi intrinsicai seco, perciò che furono tosto chiamati a Praga, ove il S. Dee, per ordine di essi angeli fece certa ammonitione a S. Maestà Cesarea, la quale per quanto ho inteso, non se dispiacque, ma havendolo voluto fermare appresso di sé per mathematico et havutone qualche intentione, hebbe poi per male che il S. Dee le disdicesse, allegando che non gli era permesso di obbligarsi a principi terreni. Tornati adunque ambedue a Cracovia, l'anno 85 io che già haveva gustato ne propositi spirituali del S. Dee non so che di miglior sentimento che ordinario, presi a visitarlo et a conferire seco, più spesso. / c. 286v / Onde del mese di marzo, se mal non mi sovviene, il S. Kelleo, veduto sopra la mia testa certo segno, come d'una candela fumante, giudicò di dovermi far parte di un sermone sentito da loro poco prima, et scritto dal S. Dee secondo il solito, nel quale era trattato della elettione di Dio, et come alcuna sorte d'eletti possono perdersi, con mirabile discretione et dottrina, della quale io presi gusto non picciolo. Continuando io dunque questa pratica contra l'avviso de' miei amici heretici, perciò che consigliandomi nell'oratione col signore mi sentivo inspirato et congiunto ad essi, onde discenai d'accompagnarli a Praga dove erano stati comandati di tornare alle loro famiglie, perciò che il S. Dee ha moglie et con essa 3 figlioletti et una figlia et il Kelleo ancora ha moglie ma senza

figliuoli, per vedere più avanti nella vita, conversatione, dottrina, et rivelationi di costoro. In questi ultimi giorni, che noi eravamo in Cracovia il Kelleo, veduto ad una messa il corpo et il sangue di Christo nostro signore, et convinto per molte prove delle sue magiche vanità, si confessò, prese il giubileo, abbruscì i libri et rinuntiò interamente a quelle arti diaboliche, onde da quel tempo in qua, non vi ha più atteso. Furono anco in quel tempo mandati fino in camera al Re di Polonia, ove l'angiolo di Dio gli fece una severa ammonitione, se non si emendava, alla quale ha poi risposto la acerba et poco christiana morte di quel Re. Arrivati dunque a Praga a 23 di marzo 1585, io alli 6 di agosto seguente, chiamato nell'oratorio, sentii per ispatio di circa tre hore Uriel angelo con tanta efficacia vivezza et spirito annuntiare la prossima visita che il signore vuol fare al suo popolo, ammonirmi de miei errori, discorrermi della vanità delle heresie et della saldezza della chiesa, mostrarmi l'autorità ecclesiastica et particolarmente della Romana sede, scoprirmi la bruttezza dell'Antichristo a venire; invitarmi a ritornare nel grembo della santa madre chiesa, palesarmi i secreti del mio cuore, et muovermi da mano altra che humana, che caduto sopra la mia faccia, con molte lacrime et compunctione promisi di emendarmi, et fui avvertito di ricogliere le male sparse semenze, et di frequentare la casa et la mensa del signore, et con parole di gran consolatione fui essortato a seguire la professione spirituale, con speranza di felice successo. Confessatomi et communicatomi dunque, ho poi cercato di vivere da buon catholico, et sono stato con questi ss. Inglesi circa 9 mesi, ne quali se bene io ho patite molte tentationi, havendo Satana cercato più volte di mettere fra noi discordie et scandoli, tutto è stato sopito per la penitenza et per la benignità del signore, che ha messo pace fra noi et composte le nostre liti. Circa il principio dell'anno 86 fu permesso al Kelleo di servirsi di certa polvere, che converte gli altri metalli in oro, la quale egli dice haver trovata in certo monte di Inghilterra al quale fu mandato dall'angiolo,<sup>2</sup> per la cui virtù fece molte verghe d'oro, le quali sono state vedute et vendute qui a Praga per circa settemila ducati di oro, et io non solo ho viste alcune di esse verghe, ma due gran sacchetti di danari ritratti di quelle, et so che prima non n'havevano, et per la necessità di casa erano stati costretti ad impegnare alcuni vasi d'argento. Ma perché il tesoro di questa polvere era stato depositato per servire, secondo mi disse il Kelleo, al suo tempo ad edificare chiese in certo luogo hora deserto, la permissione di mettervi la mano è stata *ad duritiam cordis*, anzi che no, et per ciò è meno maraviglia che Dio l'habbia levata loro, come dico appresso. Ma prima è da notare che essendo venuta la pasqua, et andando il Kelleo a confessarsi al P. Melchior Giesuito, et non gli sodisfacendo, dubitando il Padre che'l fusse ancora mago, costui gli offerse di mostrare con segni miracolosi che trattava co' buoni, non co' mali spiriti, et il P. non volle vedere la prova et così si partirono et rimangono ancora poco sodisfatti l'uno dell'altro.<sup>3</sup> Alli 10 d'Aprile di poi, quando di già

<sup>2</sup> Cf. L. Firpo, "John Dee," 39.

<sup>3</sup> P. French, *John Dee. The world of an Elizabethan magus* (London, Routledge and Paul, 1972), 123.

tra Mons. Malespina et costoro erano passati alcuni disgusti, et Mons. Sega nuovo nunzio veniva con poco buona impressione verso di loro, io mi trovai con essi nell'oratorio, che fu la settima volta, et il santo Spirito dopo haverci fatta alcuna ammonitione et predetto oscuramente un esilio che dovevamo patire, non senza ritorno, fece portare sul desco tutti i quaderni et libri della rivelatione ch'erano dell'altezza quasi d'una spanna in foglio, et il sacchetto dove era quella polvere, indi comandò che gettassimo tutto nella fornace accesa di quella stufetta ove eravamo;<sup>4</sup> et io nominatamente fui chiamato a vedergli abbruciare et viddi ridur tutto in cenere. Chiamati di poi di nuovo nell'oratorio sentimmo il signore Dio giurare per se stesso che di quei libri non se perderia pure una lettera, et mi venne in pensiero che quello fusse un segno della rinovatione del mondo, che dee essere fatta mediante il fuoco. Mi hanno detto poi che, alli 29 o 30 del detto mese, furono chiamati dallo angioletto nel giardino, et quindi nella detta stufetta, et furono resi loro i detti libri così interi, come se mai non havessero patito nulla. Fu predetto ancora che io partirei da loro et starei qualche tempo lungi da essi, poi che sarei chiamato / c. 287r / illuminato et accompagnato dal santo spirito, per convertire molti al signore Dio.<sup>5</sup> Essendo adunque quello stesso giorno [Pucci here probably confuses the dates] de 10 d'aprile chiamato per lettere d'un mio amico a Francoforte, avvenne che alli 12 di maggio mi partii<sup>6</sup> et non intesi la cosa dei libri resi né delle parole fatte di me, se non al mio ritorno. Ultimamente poi d'ottobre passato 1586 a Trebona<sup>7</sup> viddi i libri et i quaderni et parsermi quelli stessi che io viddi abbruciare. Ma la polvere non gli fu già resa anzi mi narrano che l'angioletto disse che per hora non ne havevano bisogno, et era meglio non l'havessero poi che la gli era stata cagione di scandolo et di persecutione. Considerando dunque Monsignor Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo la qualità del signor Dee huomo venerabile per l'età, per la dottrina, per la vita non colpata di lui et della sua famiglia, et oltra ciò la patienza di tanti anni, in questo santo esercizio, non senza infinite fatiche et stenti, su di lui come de' suoi teneri figlioletti, et la testimonianza di lui non esser sola ma riscontrare con quella d'uno altro il cui padre visse et morì in Inghilterra catholico et con opinione di santità, sì come costui è stato sempre catholico con tutte le sue curiosità magiche, messegli nel capo nella sua fanciullezza; gustando buoni frutti di queste rivelationi nel Kelleo, in me et in alcuni altri: vedendo molti altri segni d'una gran visita che Dio vuol fare al genere humano; sapendo che il signore non è solito di fare gran cosa che non ne parli prima con i suoi servi propheti, sentendo fare offerta di segni miracolosi, che è la maggiore che possa richiedersi, vedendo che essi non hanno rifiutato di dare ragione di sé, anzi ne hanno fatta istanza, et sono stati cacciati senz'essere stati uditi, parmi che i

4 Cf. L. Firpo, "John Dee," 59–60.

5 That was July 1586; cf. *ibid.*, 64.

6 Cf. *ibid.*, 62.

7 Dee e Kelley arrived at Trebaw on September 14, 1586; cf. *ibid.*, 72.

Reverendissimi Signori prelati devino haver cura di non dispregiare il consiglio di Dio, et però essorto con ogni humiltà et reverenza Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima che pigli trattare quel negotio con somma carità et discretione secondo la speranza che si ha di lei, et in quello che io possa servirla, non havrà se non a fare un cenno che sarò pronto ad ogni suo comandamento. Perché si come non è cosa che io non facessi per costoro, essendo servi et amici di Dio, così se fussero, per ragione, convinti del contrario, vorrei essere de primi a farli contro.

## Appendix 2

*Letter from Francesco Pucci to cardinal Charles of Bourbon, Dieppe, April 30, 1592*  
(BHPF, Hotman, 10, 1, cc. 233r–234r)

Ad tribunal omnipotentis et iustissimi Dei, ad vindicem pupillorum viduarum peregrinorum afflictorumque omnium qui ipsi sincere credunt<sup>1</sup> eumque invocant, citatum volo ac re ipsa cito te cardinalem de Borbonio tuumque Peronium et Duretum ac caeteros qui contra me Dei servum mense Februarii huius anni salutaria vobis vestraeque patriae sugerentem conspirastis et contumeliis affectum ludibrio expusistis ut intra huius anni terminum causam dicatis et rationem reddatis quare tam inhospitales, inhumanos et iniquos vos praestiteritis adversus hominem qui purae caritatis instructum in vestrum hoc regnum flagrans multis dissidiis aquam coelestis doctrinae et studia partium extinguenda aptissimam afferebat. Veritatem enim dico, non mentior, testimonium perhibente mihi conscientia mea in spiritu sancto, me, in deliberando de hac re et in hoc longo et periculoso itinere suscipiendo nempe ex Boemia usque in Normanniam hanc vestram, ut regi petenti meliorem institutionem et conciliationem religionum satisfacerem, nil magis spectasse sive quaevisse quam Dei gloriam hominum salutem et huius regni pacem, et mea omnia privata et vitam ipsam neglexisse ut vos iuvarem, atque eodem studio permotum ad<sup>2</sup> illustrissimum reverendissimumque dominum non semel scripsisse quo tibi declararem quae Deus mihi quamvis indigno retexisset et omni pietatis officio eum praesulem prosequerer et ad partem honoris divinaeque mercedis vocarem, cuius officium erat Dei servos amplecti et promovere.

Cum igitur vestris litteris accersitus ad vos veni, non sine capit is mei summo periculo spoliatus in itinere vestibus librisque meis, exigebatur [quod] episcopalis hospitalitas aut regiae nobilitatis liberalitas ut non solum non mihi prospiceretur de hospitio, sed famulus mundi illi praepositus tetrico vultu ac torvo aspectu me intuitus colloquium meum non dignatus per contemptum mihi monstraret cauponiam publicam in qua vix pessimum cubiculum et caninum cubile cum meo famulo habere possem?

Conveniebatur meae aetati professioni ac studio primis illis diebus explorare animi mei sensus per Anglum adolescentem divinarum humanarumque rerum imperitum, qui vix intelligeret aut resciret quicquam ingenuum et magis ex Peronio quam ex Deo penderet? Aequumne fuit sic disputationem instituere ut mihi vel renitenti opponeretur mordicus adolescens minor me annis viginti, qui, ut sit disertus cantator formularum

<sup>1</sup> *Cod.*: fedunt.

<sup>2</sup> Uncertain reading.

et auceps verborum,<sup>3</sup> sicut consueverunt graeculi eius aequales qui vocem et litteras in quaestu ponunt, / f. 233v / caritatem tamen illam electorum Dei amantium propriam ne a limine quidem salutasse videtur? Fuitne pium et apostolicum opus quater resistere spiritui Dei per me asserenti et probanti innumeris rationibus et testimoniis Christum esse efficacem sanatorem omnium hominum quatenus homines sunt, et mortem aeternam non imminere nisi iis qui sua inhumanitate et perversitate naturae ac Deo resistentes eam sibi parant? Eratne vobis revelatum a carne et sanguine an a coelesti patre commentum illud sufficientiae non efficacis quod est ignotum sacris profanisque autoribus ac pugnat ex diametro cum philanthropia, cum aequitate, cum promissis, cum sacramentis Dei et cum antiquis recentioribusque doctoribus sanctae catholicae apostolicae ac romanae Ecclesiae, nec placere potest nisi punicis ingeniis et theologis qui Deum punicae fidei sibi fingunt? Fuitne signum animi quaerentis veritatem non victoram ne unum quidem admittere testem disputationis ex mea parte et in angulo vestri cubiculi adversum me solum peregrinum adducere plures ex vestris commensalibus et famulis multis sophismatibus instructos? Nunquid fuit iudicium animi sibi bene consci et non resistentis coelesti doctrinae fugere iudicium Ecclesiae ac multitudinis piorum et detrectare experimenta quibus ego retexissem mentes titubantes et aculeos qui configunt conscientias falsitatis defugatrices cum obtuli me paratum ad satisfacendos (stratagemate haud dissimili ei a quo Salomon veram a falsa matre discrevit aut aliis signis) animos degenerantes a coelesti Ierusalem matre nostra? Fuitne christiana pietatis aut pastoralis caritatis, et non potius pharisaici supercilii, me tanquam diaboli instrumentum conviciis incessere et a vobis expellere, non sine comminatione inaudita et mali nominis mihi creandi apud regiam Maiestatem, ut coactus quodammodo fuerim pedes Loverio<sup>4</sup> discedere ac victimum mendicare? Quid est ingratitudo, inhumanitas et iniquitas si haec non est? Quae secta imperatorum mahometanorum non se egregie defendere posset adversus Dei servos ipsam arguentes, si hae vestrae artes apostolicae divinaeque forent? Ego tamen, accensus singulari studio iuvandi regis ac regni huius, nolui vobiscum acrius expostulare, orans Deum ut vobis peccatum illud condonaret. Officiis vos superare studui: me regi obtuli, qui iudicavit meam operam futuram utilem communi causae si concilii apud hunc Clementem summum pontificem cui Deo favente me propediem sistam, et mei laboris bonum expecto fructum. Sed quia nuper a viris fide dignis accepi vos praeteritis iniuriis novam addere curantes ut ex hac urbe expellar, in qua evangelium purum annuntiavi et adversariis os obturavi, suggestis mihi spiritus ne meo muneri ac nomini deficiam et hac admonitione vos in viam revocem ac, pulvere meorum calceorum excusso, ostendam me mihi bene conscient hinc discedere et vobis imminere graves poenas nisi resipiscetis et errorem hunc serio emendabitis. Hanc autem scitote vim

<sup>3</sup> Cicero, *De oratore*, I, 236: “cantor formularum, auceps syllaborum”.

<sup>4</sup> Louvres (Paris).

esse huius citationis ut vobis intra anni terminum ab hoc die morte moriendum sit ex dicenda causa tantae iniquitatis apud Deum, nisi interim malae illius causae patrocinium deserueritis et mihi satisfaceritis. Multis autem experimentis comprobata est ab aliis / f. 234r / multis in Italia, in Hispania atque alibi et a me ipso in Germania harum citationum efficacitas, instante viro fideli (cui Dominus promittit se daturum quicquid petierit) optimae causae patrono, parato ad se sistendum eidem Deo quacunque hora ipsum vocabit. Sit autem vobis hoc signum manus Domini quae mecum est, quotiescunque horologii sonitum audietis. Cor reprehendet vos iniuriae quam causae Dei et patriae mihiique fecistis et iudicium Dei vobis imminens in mentem revocabit. Faxit Deus optimus maximus, et hoc officium vobis sit salutare ac fructus vera poenitentia dignos a vobis eliciat per dominum Iesum Christum salvatorem nostrum. Neque enim aqua lustrali haec peccata expiantur. Si quis hanc citationem interceperit et non curaverit ut cardinalis et eius aulici eam legant, is reus esto harum iniuriarum et pro ipsis Deo respondere teneatur, ut qui summae maiestatis divinae ius et imperium retardare et impedire praesumat, dum voces et scripta appellantium ad illam intercipit aut aliquo modo supprimit. Dieppa, pridie Kalendas Maii anno a partu Virginis 1592 [30 aprile]

Ego salutis vestres studiosissimus

Franciscus Puccius Filidinus Dei et Christi servus

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# Index

Abjuration 13, 59, 62, 88, 97, 98 n. 124, 99, 106  
n. 150, 113 n. 1, 128 n. 57, 142 n. 23, 222

Acciaioli, Zanobi 85 n. 62

Aconcio, Giacomo 118 n. 18, 227, 228 n. 1

Adam, Gottfried 4, 11, 31 n. 26, 32–33, 40  
n. 62, 41, 48, 53, 55–56, 67, 86, 149, 151,  
176 n. 36, 189, 203 n. 53, 223

Aeschimann, Alfred 68 n. 13

Agostini, Ludovico 5, 153 n. 60

Alamanni, Francesco 70, 76

Alamanni, jurist 70, 76

Alamanni, Vincenzo 70, 76

Alberigo, Giuseppe 52 n. 112, 151 n. 52

Aldobrandini, Cinzio, cardinal 136, 155 n. 63,  
218–219, 220 nn. 8–10, 221 n. 11

Aldobrandini, Ippolito, *see* Clement VIII,  
pope

Alessandro de' Medici, duke of Florence 75,  
77

Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia), pope 30

Alighieri, Dante 23, 24, 35 n. 42, 41–42  
nn. 71–73, 43 n. 76

Allegrain, Isabeau 138

Allen, Michael J.B. 34 n. 37

Almasi, Gabor 97 n. 116, 173 n. 26, 175  
nn. 33–34, 176 n. 36, 181 n. 50

Ambrosini, Federica 65 n. 4

Amerbach, Basilius 191

Anabaptism 91

Andreä, Jacobus 10, 59, 202

Andrés, Gregorio de 153 n. 60

Ange de Joyeuse 140, 145

Antimachiavellism 76 n. 34

Antitrinitarism 11, 13 n. 42, 67, 91, 96, 118, 175,  
178, 181, 197 n. 36, 228

Arblaster, Paul 92 n. 99

Arias Montano, Benito 92 n. 97, 93

Arminius, Jacob 193 n. 19, 194 n. 29, 223

Arnold, Claus 27 n. 14, 154 n. 62

Asseldonk, Optatus van 140 n. 14

Asso, Cecilia 43 n. 77, 210 n. 87

Aubert, Alberto IX

Auger, Edmon 68, 69, 71

Azzolini, Decio, cardinal 106 nn. 149–150,  
113, 142

Backus, Irena 74 n. 30

Bacon, Francis 17

Baius, Michael 19

Baker, Derek 165 n. 2, 195 n. 24

Bakhuisen Van den Brink, Jan Nicolaas 66  
n. 10

Balbani, Niccolò 2, 32 n. 29, 42 n. 73, 54, 56,  
72, 86

Baldini, Artemio Enzo 5 nn. 8, 11, 26 n. 10, 42  
n. 73, 115 n. 5, 116 n. 12, 117 nn. 14, 16, 118  
n. 17, 121 n. 25, 126 n. 42, 127 nn. 49–52,  
54, 128 nn. 57–59, 129 nn. 64–68, 130  
nn. 60–76, 131 n. 80, 153 n. 60

Balsamo, Luigi 72 n. 21

Bandini, Bruno V. 4 n. 6

Bañez, Domingo 161

Bangs, Carl 194 n. 21

Baptism 81, 84, 91, 120, 124, 147–149, 152, 154,  
158, 161, 188–189, 201, 204, 205 n. 65, 206  
n. 70, 207

Barclaius, Johannes 224

Baridon, Silvio F. 66 n. 6 and 9

Barnaud, Jean 68 n. 13

Barnavi, Elie 7, 8, 10, 85 n. 61, 92 n. 99, 93  
n. 104, 114 n. 4, 115 n. 6, 136 n. 1

Bartoli, Cosimo 35, 42

Bartoli, Giorgio 45

Basilius of Chartres 191

Bathory, Stephan, king of Poland 96

Bathory, Ursula 175 n. 33

Battista, Anna Maria 76 n. 34, 131 n. 80

Battistini, Mario 143 n. 26

Bauduin, François 172, 178, 182, 185, 186 n. 63

Bäumer, Remigius 33 n. 32

Baumgartner, Frederic J. 136 n. 1, 167 n. 9

Bayard, Françoise 138 n. 10

Bayle, Pierre 217

Beaune, Renaud de 191

Beccadelli, Ludovico, cardinal 175

Békés, Gerard J. 164 n. 91

Bellarmino, Roberto, cardinal 11, 20, 25, 26,  
162 n. 86, 164 n. 91, 217 n. 112

Belligni, Eleonora 124 n. 34

Bellarini, Maria Grazia 78 n. 40

Benadusi, Lorenzo IX

Benedetto da Mantova, *see* Fontanini

Benedict, Philip 13 n. 43, 37–37, 39, 40, 64, 149 n. 44, 181 n. 48, 225–226

*Benefit of Christ* 13–14, 32, 40, 43, 49, 55, 57–59, 62, 94, 134, 158, 164, 188, 202, 225, 227

Benvoglienti, Achille 46

Benzoni, Gino 77 n. 36, 79 n. 41

Bergier, Jean François 194 n. 21

Berkvens-Stevelinck, Christiane 182 n. 54

Bernini, Domenico 124 n. 34

Betti, Francesco 10, 56, 91 n. 95, 94 n. 108, 166

Bèze, Théodore de 10, 36 n. 43, 59, 67, 69–70, 74, 97 n. 116, 168 n. 11, 180–181, 193–194, 202, 204

Biagioni, Mario 2 n. 2, 7 n. 17, 8–9, 10 nn. 33–34, 36, 11 nn. 37–38, 14 n. 47, 15 n. 50, 31 n. 24, 33 n. 34, 36 nn. 43–44, 54 n. 118, 56, 59 nn. 129, 131, 60 n. 132, 85 n. 59, 89 n. 85, 95 n. 112, 137 n. 6, 164 n. 93, 174 n. 30, 176 n. 36, 179 n. 43, 184 n. 58, 187 n. 66, 202 nn. 49–50, 52, 203 n. 53, 223 nn. 17–18, 224 n. 20

Biandrata, Giorgio 13 n. 42, 16

Biersack, Manfred 163 n. 89

Bietenholz, Peter 120 n. 22, 122 n. 27, 123 n. 32

Biloghi, Dominique 136 n. 1

Biondi, Albano 125 n. 40

Black Legend 153 n. 60

Blois, Flavien de 139 n. 13

Bochart de Champigny, Charles 138

Bochart de Champigny, Jean 138 n. 10

Bodenstein, Adam 67

Bolognetti, Alberto 97, 98, 143

Bolsec, Jérôme 172, 174, 177–178

Bonelli, Michele, cardinal 71, 211 n. 93

Bongi, Salvatore 28 n. 18

Borrhaus, Martin 54, 118–119, 121–122

Borromeo, Agostino 116 n. 8

Boucher, Jacqueline 64 n. 1, 69 n. 13, 136 n. 1

Bouwsma, William J. 123 n. 33, 131 n. 78

Brenz, Johannes 222

Brisson, Bernabé 136 n. 1, 138

Brocardo, Jacopo 65, 123 n. 33

Broggio, Paolo 20 n. 60, 161 n. 64

Brown, Virginia ix

Brucioli, Antonio 51, 66

Brundin, Abigail 43 n. 76

Bruno, Giordano 1, 17–18, 44 n. 83, 89 n. 85, 207 n. 76, 209–211, 213–217

Bruto, Giovanni Michele 12, 64, 65 n. 3, 98, 143

Buisson, Ferdinand Edouard 92 n. 97

Bullinger, Heinrich 54, 70, 121–122 n. 27, 184 n. 59

Burgio, Santo 94 nn. 108–109

Butzer, Martin 122

Caccamo, Domenico 75 n. 32, 97 n. 118, 181 n. 49

Cadoni, Giorgio 16 n. 52

Cagnolati, Antonella 65 n. 3

Calais, Henry de 139 n. 11

Calderini de Marchi, Rita 76 n. 33, 77 n. 36

Calixtus, Georg 183 n. 57

Calonaci, Stefano 75 n. 32

Calori Cesis, Ferdinando 97 n. 117

Calovius, Abraham 223

Calvin, Jean 36 n. 43, 172 n. 24

Calvini, Crisostomo 39

Calzona, Arturo 42 n. 70

Campanella, Tommaso 1, 4–5, 10, 17, 95, 210–213, 216–217, 222, 229

Campana, Giovanni Paolo 97

Campion, Edmund 25, 38, 39, 90, 92 n. 99

Campitelli, Carlo 86 n. 63

Canfield, Benoît de 139–140

Cantimori, Delio 3–8, 12 n. 41, 15 n. 49, 15 n. 24, 32 nn. 28, 29, 36 nn. 43–44, 65 n. 4, 70 n. 17, 80 n. 43, 81 n. 44, 82 n. 51, 84 nn. 56, 58, 85 n. 62, 91 n. 96, 116 n. 13, 118 n. 17, 127 n. 53, 137, 145

Cantù, Francesca 20 n. 60, 60 n. 11

Capéran, Louis 120 n. 23

Capitone, Wolfgang 118

Capuchin Friars 139

Censorship 26, 27, 41, 47 n. 95, 58, 89, 202, 228, 229 n. 6

Cheynell, Francis 228

Chiliasm 119 n. 19, 121, 122 n. 28

Conciliarism 130

Controversy (religious) 31, 69, 146

Controversy *De auxiliis* 161 nn. 84–85, 162

Conversion 30, 35, 60, 61–62, 73, 94, 97, 98  
 n. 120, 99–100, 104, 106, 107, 114, 117, 119,  
 120 n. 24, 122 nn. 27, 28, 128, 131, 134, 136,  
 141, 143, 156, 157, 158 n. 75, 163, 168–269,  
 178, 183, 190, 194 n. 22

*Conversos* 121

Council of Trent 15, 18–19, 26, 39, 123,  
 151–152, 155, 157, 162, 164, 174, 174 n. 43,  
 177, 206

Courcelles, Etienne de 224

D'Alessandro, Alessandro 42 n. 72

D'Ancel, Guillaume 136, 152, 157, 220

D'Ascia, Luca 35 n. 40, 120 nn. 23, 24, 123  
 n. 32

D'Osimo, Bernard 138, 140

Dall'Aglio, Stefano 28 n. 18, 64 n. 1, 73 n. 33

Dalmas, Davide 36 n. 42, 42 n. 73, 43 n. 74

Dandino, Anselmo 78 n. 40, 79, 80

Daussy, Hugues 168 n. 10

Davies, Martin 34 n. 37

De Bujanda, Martínez Jesús xi

De Caro, Gaspare 113 n. 1

De Dominicis, Marcantonio 18, 124

De Gaetano, Armand L. 42 n. 70

De Gaspari, Giovan Battista 7, 137, 138 n. 8

De Jonge, Christiaan 193 n. 18, 195 n. 24, 196  
 n. 29, 197 nn. 35–36, 198 n. 37

De Maio, Romeo 131 n. 80

De Mas, Enrico 18 n. 57, 100 n. 133, 124 n. 34,  
 161 n. 85

De Vio, Tommaso (Caietano), cardinal 25,  
 26, 33, 154

Decrusy 167

Dee, John 6, 17, 35 n. 39, 93 n. 104, 98 n. 122,  
 100–105, 107–109, 111–112, 114, 140, 141  
 n. 17, 176 n. 36, 184

Del Bene, Piero 58 n. 127, 214 n. 102

Del Corro, Antonio 10, 33 n. 33, 39, 54, 93  
 n. 104, 172–174, 177–179, 180 n. 44

Della Barba, Pompeo 43

Della Barba, Simone 43

Della Rovere, Giulio 91

Demerson, Geneviève 68

Demerson, Guy 68

Descimon, Robert 136 n. 1, 166 n. 3

Devereux, Robert, count of Essex 165

Dijk, W. C. van 139 n. 11

Domenichi, Ludovico 43, 46, 47 n. 95

Domenichini, Daniele 92 n. 97, 93 n. 104

Domínguez, Joaquín M. 205 n. 66

Dominicans 96 n. 116, 154, 161

Doni, Agostino 12

Donnelly, John Patrick 96 n. 115

Dorigny, Jean 68 n. 13

Du Jon, François 3, 7–8, 11, 164, 179, 187,  
 191–201, 205–7, 217, 222

Du Perron, Jacques Davy, cardinal 155–8,  
 168–9, 174

Dubois, Claude-Gilbert 123 n. 33

Dubost, Jean-François 64 n. 1

Dudith Sbardellatus, Andreas 64, 66, 173,  
 178

Dudley, Robert 91, 165

Dufour, Alain 8

Dufournet, Jean 76 n. 35

Duplessis-Mornay, Philippe 168, 172

Duret, Jean 156, 158–159, 161, 169

Eisenblicher, Konrad 43 n. 73

Eliav-Feldon, Miriam 7–8, 10

Elizabeth I, Queen of England 37, 126, 165,  
 191, 214

Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia 17

Enenkel, Karl A.E. 66 n. 7

Engammare, Max ix

Erasmus of Rotterdam 19, 43, 209, 226–227

Erastianism 185

Erastus, Thomas 58, 184

Ernest of Bavaria, Archbishop of Cologne 219

Ernst, Germana 5 n. 7, 211 n. 93, 212 nn. 95,  
 97–99, 213 n. 100, 217 n. 112, 229 n. 6

Erspamer, Francesco 75 n. 33, 78 n. 39

Estoile, Pierre de l' 186 n. 65

Eubel, Konrad 144 n. 28

Evans, Robert John Weston 18 n. 56

Exile 3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 15, 28, 51, 52 n. 112, 54, 56,  
 63–66, 71–78, 80, 83, 91, 99, 108, 174, 177,  
 178, 209, 213, 214, 225

Fanlo, Jean-Raymond 123 n. 33

Fascism 4

Fatio, Olivier 36 n. 43, 194 n. 21

Fattori, Maria Teresa 131 n. 80

Fauchet, Claude 126 n. 44

Faye, Charles de 126 n. 44

Feingold, Mordechai 211 n. 92  
 Feist, Elizabeth 4  
 Felici, Lucia 119 nn. 19–20, 122 nn. 27–29, 31  
 Ferdinand I de' Medici, granduke of Tuscany 140  
 Ferdinand I, Holy Roman Emperor 174  
 Ferdinand, archduke 227  
 Féret, Pierre 155 n. 65  
 Fernández Collado, Angel 113 n. 1  
 Ferrara, Mario 16, 25, 80, 174, 228  
 Ferretto, Silvia 21 n. 63, 130 n. 77, 131 n. 79  
 Ficino, Marsilio 31, 34, 50, 225–226  
 Filalete, Giorgio, *called il Turchetto* 64  
 Fiorato, Adelin Charles 76 n. 35  
 Fiore, Francesco Paolo 30  
 Firpo, Luigi 3–6, 56, 85, 100, 137, 221  
 Firpo, Massimo 1X, 12 n. 41, 13 n. 42, 14 n. 44, 17 n. 53, 24 n. 4, 35 n. 42, 66 nn. 8–10, 67 n. 11, 97 nn. 118, 120  
 Flaminio, Marcantonio 13, 15, 40, 225  
 Fleischmann, Giorgio 206  
 Florentine Academy 41, 43  
 Florentine nation (Lyon) 63, 73  
 Foa, Anna 125 n. 40  
 Fontanini, Benedetto da Mantova 37 n. 46  
 Fouilloux, Etienne 72 n. 21  
 Fragnito, Gigliola IX, 1 n. 1, 24 n. 5, 37 n. 46, 43 n. 75, 115 n. 7, 215 n. 108, 216 n. 110  
 Franceschini, Chiara 154 n. 62, 208 n. 80  
 Francis of Anjou (1555–1584), duke 167  
 Francesco da Meleto 28  
 Francis I de' Medici, granduke of Tuscany 45 n. 88, 64, 74, 141  
 Francis of Assisi, saint 139  
 Franck, Sébastien 176, 187  
 Francken, Christian 6  
 Frangipani, Ottavio Mirto 191, 218–219  
 Frederick III, Elector Palatine 193  
 Frederick V, Elector Palatine 18  
 French Catholic League 136 n. 1, 167 n. 9  
 French *Politiques* 182

Galeota, Gustavo 164 n. 91  
 Galli, Tolomeo, cardinal 79  
 García Pinilla, Ignacio J. 180 n. 44  
 Garfagnini, Gian Carlo 29 n. 19  
 Garin, Eugenio 28 n. 18, 30 n. 21, 45 n. 87  
 Geisendorf, Paul F. 68 n. 13

Gelli, Giambattista 42, 65  
 Gent, William 191  
 Gentile, Valentino 67, 181  
 Gentili, Alberico 90–92  
 Gentillet, Innocent 77 n. 36  
 Gerini, Girolamo 74 n. 30  
 Gerlich, Robert S. 205 n. 66  
 Gesner, Konrad 50 n. 109  
 Gessner, Salomon 222  
 Giacomini, Lorenzo 45 n. 85  
 Giambonelli, Lisabetta 90  
 Giambonelli, Mariootto 71  
 Giambullari, Pierfrancesco 42  
 Giannotti, Donato 65 n. 3  
 Gil, Juan 39  
 Gilly, Carlos 39 n. 56, 153 n. 60, 173 n. 25, 179 n. 44, 186 n. 64  
 Ginzburg, Carlo 72 n. 24, 91 n. 96, 124 n. 36  
 Gioacchino da Fiore 119  
 Giolito de' Ferrari, Gabriele 41  
 Giorgio Siculo 9, 36, 39, 91, 123, 174, 213, 225, 228  
 Girolami, Bernardo 75  
 Godman, Peter 27 n. 14  
 Gonzague, Louis de 145 nn. 31, 33  
 Gordon Kinder, Arthur 39 n. 56  
 Gorfunkel, Aleksandr C. 207 n. 76, 209 n. 85  
 Gorin, Andrien 67  
 Gotor Miguel 253  
 Graziano, Francesco 210  
 Greengras, Mark 136 n. 1  
 Gregory XIV, pope 3, 115–116, 125, 127, 129–130, 136, 214  
 Groën, Georgette de 72 nn. 21–22, 24  
 Grotius, Hugo 185, 195  
 Grynaeus, Johann Jakob 2, 54, 58, 178  
 Guba, James E. 155 n. 65  
 Guggisberg, Hans Rudolf 67 n. 12, 118 n. 18, 186 n. 63, 228 n. 4  
 Gulik, Wilhelmus van 115 n. 7  
 Gunnoe, Charles D. 185 n. 59

Hainsworth, Peter 43 n. 76  
 Hajek, Tadeus 176 n. 36  
 Hamilton, Alistair 93 n. 104, 94 n. 106, 131 n. 78  
 Hankins, James 30 n. 21  
 Haren, Jean 197 n. 35

Harrison, Brian 208 n. 80  
 Hauben, Paul J. 173 n. 25  
 Hebrew 116, 193  
 Heller, Henry 64 n. 1, 76 n. 34  
 Hemmingsen, Niels 208  
 Henry III, king of France 17, 80, 126, 135, 140, 156, 165, 167–168, 214  
 Henry IV, king of France 1, 17, 30, 62, 113, 115–116, 126–127, 131–132, 134–137, 156–157, 159, 164, 166, 168, 170, 178, 188, 191–192, 194–195, 214  
 Henry of Guise 135, 140  
 Herbert, Edward 223–224  
 Hermetism 18, 31, 35 n. 42  
 Higman, Francis M. 157 n. 71  
 Holleran, James V. 89 n. 88  
 Holtrop, Philip C. 174 n. 29  
 Honoré de Paris 122, 137–140, 143, 145, 147  
 Hoppe, Harry R. 78 n. 40  
 Hotman, Jean 3, 165–166, 169–173, 176–181, 183–184, 195  
 Houlston, Victor 89 n. 88  
 Hours, Bernard 72 n. 21  
 Huber, Samuel 7–8, 10, 174, 202–203, 208, 222  
 Huguenots 72–73, 76, 210  
 Humanism 4, 96, 210  
 Hunnius, Aegidius 222–223  
 Irenism, irenicism 3, 8, 15, 16, 119, 124, 134, 146, 164–171, 181–187, 191–201  
 Isambert, François-André 167 n. 8  
 Isidoro da Villapadierna 139 n. 11  
 Isnardi Parente, Margherita 5 n. 8  
 Isozio, Giannandrea 100 n. 133  
 Israel, Jonathan I. 182 n. 54  
 Isselt, Michael van (Jansonius) 207 n. 71  
 Italian Reformation 12, 16–17, 40, 225–228  
 Italian *spirituali* 15  
 Ittig, Thomas 223  
 James I, king of England 18  
 Jane of Habsburg, archduchess of Austria 45 n. 88  
 Jedin, Hubert 151 n. 52  
 Jesuits 10, 19–20, 24, 38, 92, 96–99, 113, 154, 161–162, 164, 167  
 Joannou, Perikle-P. 151 n. 52  
 Johannes called the Aquense, Jesuit 113–114  
 n. 3, 164 n. 2  
 Jordan, Wilbur K. 187  
 Jostock, Ingeborg 154 n. 62  
 Jouanna, Arlette 68 n. 13, 136 n. 1  
 Jourdan, Athanase-Jean-Léger 167 n. 8  
 Jung-Inglessis, Eva-Maria 41 n. 65  
 Kelley, Donald R. 165 n. 1  
 Kelley, Edward 17, 100–101, 111–112, 140, 184  
 Kennedy, William J. 66 n. 7  
 Kerquefinen, Claude de 66–67  
 Kimedoncius, Jacobus 208  
 Kingdon, Robert 194  
 Kirchner, Frédéric 68 n. 13  
 Klein, Robert 25 n. 8  
 Knollys, Francis 91–92  
 Koch, Ulrich 54, 58, 178  
 Koller, Alexander 98 n. 123  
 Kowalska, Halina 175 n. 33  
 Kuntz, Marion L. 65 n. 4, 123 n. 33  
 Kunz, Erhard 121 n. 26  
 La Boétie, Etienne de 76  
 La Primaudaye, Pierre de 168  
 Lacché, Luigi 91 n. 95  
 Laínez, Diego 19  
 Landriani, Marsilio 126  
 Landtsheer, Jeanine de 94 n. 108, 97 n. 116  
 Languet, Hubert 17  
 Lapini, Eufrosino 23, 31, 44–51  
 Laplatte, Claude 156 n. 66  
 Las Casas, Bartolomé de 153 n. 60  
 Lattis, James M. xi  
 Lauster, Jörg 34 n. 37  
 Lavenia, Vincenzo 39 n. 56, 91 n. 95, 153 n. 60  
 Lazzarino del Grosso, Anna 76 n. 34  
 Le Thiec, Guy 136 n. 1  
 Lecler, Joseph 126 n. 44, 187  
 Lenzoni, Francesco 113, 143  
 Leonardi, Claudio 151 n. 52  
 Leys, Leonard de 163 n. 88  
 Leyser Polycarp 222  
 Lignereux, Yann 72 n. 21  
 Limbo 32, 148, 154  
 Lipsius, Justus 191  
 List, Günter 121 n. 26

Lo Re, Salvatore **IX**, 42 n. 70  
 Loades, Davis **181** n. 48  
 Lomellini, Goffredo **131**  
 Lord's Prayer **45**–**47**, 49  
 Lorenzi, Domenico **124**  
 Lorenzino de' Medici **75**, 78 n. 39  
 Lorenzo of Brindisi **145**  
 Louthan, Howard **18** n. 56, 96 n. 115  
 Loyseleur de Villiers, Pierre **74** n. 30, 172, 179 n. 41  
 Luther, Martin **13**, **15**, **40**, **44**, **95**, **121**, **123** n. 33, **182**, **210**–**212**, **225**, **227**  
 Luzzati, Michele **125** n. 40

Machiavelli, Niccolò **16**  
 Madonia, Claudio **96** n. 115, **97** n. 119  
 Madruzzo, Ludovico **221**  
 Magno, Alberto **46**  
 Malcom, Noel **124** n. 34  
 Maltby, William S. **153** n. 60  
 Manelfi, Pietro **91**  
 Manerf, Guido **94** n. 109  
 Manetsch, Scott M. **97** n. 116, **168** n. 11, **194** n. 20–21  
 Manuzio, Antonio **41**  
 Margaret of Navarre, princess of Angoulême **186** n. 65  
 Martin, Lynn A. **68** n. 13  
 Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland **156**  
 Mary Tudor, Queen of England **89**  
 Masson, Jacques (Latomus) **19**  
 Mastellone, Salvo **76** n. 34  
 Matignon, Jacques de **156**  
 Matthew, Henry Colin Gray **208** n. 80  
 Mauzaize, Jean **139** n. 11  
 Maximilian II of Habsburg, Holy Roman Emperor **173**–**174**, **180**  
 Maximilian, archduke, son of Emperor Ferdinand I **114**, **227**  
 Maylender, Michele **23** n. 2, **45** n. 86  
 Mazelin, François **139** n. 11, **140** n. 15, **145** n. 32  
 Mazzei, Rita **96** n. 114  
 Mazzocco, Angelo **34** n. 37  
 McCoog, Thomas M. **38** n. 54, **89** n. 88  
 McLaughlin, Martin L. **43** n. 76  
 Méchoulan, Henry **67** n. 11  
 Medici, Raffaello de' **45** n. 86  
 Melantone, Filippo **171**  
 Menocchio, *see* Scandella, Domenico  
 Merlin, Pierre-Jean-Raymond **167**  
 Meylan, Henri **70** nn. **17**–**18**  
 Migliorato, Giuseppe **185** n. 59  
 Millenarism **119** n. 19  
 Milton, Anthony **208** n. 80  
 Minucci, Minuccio **131**  
 Mocenigo, Giovanni **210**, **215** n. 106  
 Molina, Luis de **161**, **163**  
 Molinism **164**  
 Moltmann, Jürgen **65** n. 4  
 Montelupi, Sebastiano **96** n. 114  
 More, Thomas, saint **17**  
 Moreau-Reibel, Jean **173** n. 26  
*Moriskos* **121**  
 Morone, Giovanni, cardinal **13**  
 Motta, Franco **19**, **20** n. **60**, **162** n. **86**  
 Mouchel, Christian **94** n. **108**  
 Mourre, Alexis **71** n. **20**  
 Mucillo, Maria **35** n. **38**, **50** n. **109**  
 Muir, Edward **IX**  
 Müntzer, Thomas **121**

Natural Faith **9**, **20**, **31**–**32**, **34** n. **36**, **37**, **187**, **189**, **199**–**201**, **204**–**205**, **207**, **217**  
 Nazari, Giampaolo **154**, **219**  
 Negri, Francesco **14**  
 Nellen, Henk **97** n. **116**, **175** n. **33**  
 Neoplatonism **34**–**35**  
 Nerli, Filippo **23**  
 Neuser, Wilhelm H. **36** n. **43**  
 Niclaes, Hendrik **93**, **94** n. **105**  
 Nicodemism **38**, **85**, **175** n. **34**, **186** n. **65**, **225**  
 Nigro, Salvatore Silvano **IX**  
 Nys, Johan (Driedo) **19**

O'Connell, Monique **IX**  
 O'Malley, Charles **118** n. **18**  
 O'Neill, Charles **205** n. **66**  
 Ochino, Bernardino **46**, **50**, **67**, **213**, **225**, **227**–**229**  
 Olivier, Achille **120** n. **23**  
 Oort, E. **196** n. **29**  
 Orsini, Troilo **76**  
 Osiander, Lukas **3**, **7**, **10**, **59**, **122**, **164**, **201**–**204**, **207**–**208**, **217**

Osorio, Girolamo 24, 26  
 Ottoni, Luciano degli 36, 37 n. 46, 39

Pagden, Anthony 153 n. 60  
 Paleologa, Margherita 46  
 Paleologo, Giacomo 118 n. 18, 124, 175  
 Pallavicino, Orazio 126  
 Panciatichi, Bartolomeo 35 n. 42  
 Panella, Antonio 24 n. 4  
 Panizza, Letizia 43 n. 76  
 Pantera, Giovanni Antonio 125  
 Papy, Jan 66 n. 7  
 Paraeus, David 183 n. 57  
 Parker, Charles H. 94 n. 109  
 Parsons, Robert 89, 92 n. 99  
 Pastor, Ludwig von 126 nn. 42–43  
 Pastore, Stefania 39 n. 59  
 Patrizi, Francesco 1, 17, 215, 219  
 Patterson, William B. 18 n. 57  
 Paul III, pope 177  
 Paul IV, pope 23  
 Paul V, pope 161  
 Paulet, Amias 165–166  
 Pedullà, Gabriele 18 n. 56  
 Pelagianism 20, 91 n. 95, 164, 207, 209, 216, 224  
 Pelagius 149, 207, 217  
 Peretti di Montalto, Alessandro, cardinal 113 n. 2, 144 n. 28  
 Perini, Leandro 50 nn. 108–109, 83 n. 53  
 Perna, Pietro 50, 67, 227  
 Péronnet, Michel 171 n. 20  
 Perrone Compagni, Vittoria 42 n. 70  
 Pertici, Roberto 4 n. 6  
 Pertile, Lino 9  
 Petersen, Rodney L. 65 n. 4  
 Petrarca, Francesco 46 n. 89, 66  
 Peyronel, Susanna 40 n. 61  
 Philip II, king of Spain 113 n. 1, 126  
 Piattoli, Renato 6  
 Picchena, Curzio 141 n. 19, 143  
 Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni 23, 27, 30, 45 n. 87, 46, 50 n. 109, 226  
 Picot, Emile 64 n. 1  
 Pierozzi, Antonino 33, 154  
 Pighe, Albert 19, 20 n. 61, 24–25, 32–33  
 Pinelli, Gian Vincenzo 214, 222

Pirillo, Diego 9, 44 n. 83, 89 n. 85, 211 n. 90  
 Pius IV, pope 24  
 Pius IX, pope 139  
 Pius V, pope 24  
 Pizzorusso, Giovanni 98 n. 123  
 Plaisance, Michel 41 n. 69, 42 n. 70, 76 n. 35, 77 n. 36  
 Plantin, Christophe 93, 94 n. 106  
 Platonic Academy 50  
 Plotinus, greek philosopher 50  
 Pole, Reginald, cardinal 13–16, 37 n. 46, 64, 89, 175, 177, 225  
 Politi, Lancellotto (Ambrogio Catarino) 24–26, 28, 32, 64 n. 1, 154  
 Popkin, Richard H. 67 n. 11, 119 n. 19  
 Porcia, Gerolamo 220  
 Possevino, Antonio 68–69, 71–73, 97 n. 119  
 Postel, Guillaume 17, 123, 131  
 Posthumus Meyjes, Guillaume H. M. 166 n. 3, 182–183, 185–186  
 Potestà, Gian Luigi 125 n. 39  
 Predestination 8–11, 14, 36 n. 43, 37 n. 46, 43–44, 52, 54, 59, 66, 119, 127, 174, 202, 210–211, 213, 226  
 Prevost, Michel 139 n. 11  
 Procacci, Giuliano 77 n. 36  
 Prodi, Paolo 151 n. 52  
 Prohibited books 40  
 Prophetism 15, 70, 116, 184  
 Prosperi, Adriano 9, 4 n. 4, 121 n. 25, 213  
 Provana, Prospero 10, 12, 97  
 Pucci, Emilio 216 n. 109  
 Pucci, Giovanni 143  
 Pucci, Pandolfo 77  
 Puccianism 8 n. 24, 184 n. 58, 223–224  
 Puteo, Antonio 108, 110

Quaglioni, Diego 91 n. 95, 211 n. 90  
 Quaquarelli, Leonardo 31 n. 23

Radecke, Matteo 57 n. 126, 94 n. 107, 101 n. 136  
 Ragazzoni, Girolamo 215 n. 106  
 Raitt, Jill 202 n. 49  
 Rajna, Pio 77 n. 36  
 Ramsey, Ann W. 136 n. 1  
 Rao, Ida Giovanna 25 n. 8

Redondo, Augustin 76 n. 35  
 Rees, Valery 34 n. 37  
 Reeves, Marjorie 65 n. 4  
 Reichenberger, Robert 109 n. 159  
 Reineccius, Christian 224 n. 19  
 Renata of France, duchess of Ferrara 174  
 Renato, Camillo, *see* Ricci, Paolo  
 Reuter, Quirinus 96 n. 116, 173 n. 26  
 Revol, Louis 133  
 Reynolds, Ernest E. 89 n. 88  
 Ricci, Paolo, detto Camillo Renato 114 n. 5, 115, 116 nn. 8–9, 132, 170 n. 16, 218  
 Ricci, Saverio 131 n. 80  
 Ricuperati, Giuseppe 67 n. 11  
 Ridolfi, Roberto 172 n. 23  
 Rinuccini, Andrea 50–51, 63, 72  
 Rinuccini, Bonaccorso 50, 63, 72  
 Rinuccini, Giovanni Paolo 50, 63, 72  
 Rinuccini, Nicola 50–51, 63, 72  
 Rinuccini, Pierfrancesco 50, 63, 72  
 Rizzo, Francesca 94 n. 108  
 Rocquain, Félix 126 n. 43  
 Rodolph II, Holy Roman Emperor 98, 102, 211  
 Ròman d'Amat, Jean-Charles 139 n. 11  
 Roman Inquisition 16, 124, 154, 213, 215 n. 108, 216, 228  
 Romano, Vincenzo 172 n. 23  
 Romeo, Rosario 120 n. 23  
 Ronsard, Pierre de 156  
 Rosa, Mario IX  
 Rosicrucianism 18  
 Rospitel, Jean 69  
 Rotondò, Antonio IX, 2 n. 3, 3, 5–9, 12 n. 41, 33 n. 33, 50 n. 109, 53 n. 115, 54 nn. 117–119, 74, 179 n. 43, 198 n. 36, 200 n. 48  
 Roussel, Gérard 186 n. 65  
 Ruggeri, Romano 96 n. 115  
 Salicini, Giulio Cesare 98 n. 124  
 Salmerón, Alfonso 19  
 Salviati, Maria 41  
 Salvini, Salvino 23 n. 2  
 Sanfelice, Tommaso 14  
 Sanfilippo, Matteo 98 n. 123  
 Santoro, Giulio Antonio, cardinal 1, 218  
 Saracini, Sinolfo 74–77  
 Sarx, Tobias 193 n. 18  
 Sassetti, Filippo 45  
 Savelli, Jacopo, cardinal 97 n. 119  
 Savonarola, Girolamo 3, 16, 23–25, 27–30, 33, 65, 77, 154, 172–173, 177, 215 n. 108, 226  
 Savonarolism 70  
 Sbaraini, Francesco 124  
 Scandella Domenico (Menocchio) 124  
 Sceaux, Revol de 139 n. 11  
 Schickler, Fernand 166 n. 3  
 Schmaus, Michael 121 n. 26  
 Schmid, Johannes 224  
 Schweizer, Joseph 144 n. 28  
 Schwenckfeld, Caspar 90, 176, 187, 203  
 Secchi Tarugi, Luigi 120 n. 22  
 Second Scholasticism 153  
 Sega, Filippo 99, 106–108, 110, 113, 136, 142–143  
 Séguier, Nicolas 168–170, 172  
 Seidel Menchi, Silvana 13 n. 43, 181 n. 48  
 Seifert, Arno 119 n. 19, 122 n. 28  
 Senneton, Claude 66  
 Serario, Nicolò 3, 11, 205 n. 66  
 Seripando, Girolamo, cardinal 19  
 Serrarius, Petrus 183  
 Serres, Jean de 172  
 Servetus, Michel 197 n. 36, 228  
 Sfondrati, Paolo Camillo, cardinal 3, 114 n. 5, 115–116, 125, 132, 170 n. 16, 218  
 Siculo, Giorgio, *see* Giorgio Siculo  
 Sidney, Philip 17  
 Siekiera, Anna 45 n. 85  
 Siguenza, José de 153  
 Silvinus a Nadro 139 n. 11  
 Simoncelli, Paolo 41 n. 65, 76 n. 35  
 Simoni, Simone 13 n. 42, 16, 97  
 Simonutti, Luisa 50 n. 108, 67 n. 11  
 Simpson, Richard 89 n. 88  
 Sin of Adam 32–33, 41, 48, 53, 55, 151, 189  
 Sistus V, pope 27, 113, 126, 144 n. 28, 167, 191  
 Smedt, Oskar de 92 n. 99  
 Smetius, Henricus 193 n. 19  
 Smith, David Baird 166 n. 3  
 Smith, Malcom C. 186  
 Snecanus, Gellius 208, 209 n. 83  
 Snoeks, Remi 156 n. 65  
 Socinianism 223  
 Sommervogel, Carlos 205 n. 66, 207 n. 76

Soto, Domingo de 39 n. 59  
 Soto, Pedro de 19  
 Sozzi, Lionello 76 n. 34  
 Sozzini, Fausto 4, 11, 33, 52, 54 n. 119, 56–58, 60, 79 n. 41, 86 n. 63, 89 n. 87, 94, 97, 101 n. 136, 166, 176, 198 n. 36  
 Sozzini, Lelio 198 n. 36  
 Spampinato, Vincenzo 214 n. 103  
 Speciano, Cesare 99 nn. 124–126, 136, 155, 205, 219–221  
 Spini, Giorgio 5, 85 n. 62  
 Spinoza, Baruch 217, 224  
 Squarcialupi, Marcello 97  
 Steuco, Agostino 24–26, 34–36  
 Strozzi, Pietro 75 n. 32  
 Sulzer, Simon 54, 58, 178  
 Suso, Enrico 139  
 Szczucki, Lech 11 n. 37, 33 n., 33 n. 4, 54 n. 118, 118 n. 18, 124 n. 35, 173 n. 26, 212 n. 95  
 Szepessy, Tiburtio 173 n. 26

Tallon, Alain 13 n. 43, 131 n. 78, 181 n. 48  
 Tauler, Johannes 139  
 Tazbir, Janusz 96 n. 115  
 Tedeschi, John IX–XI, 5, 39 n. 56, 97 n. 119, 153 n. 60  
 Tellechea Idigoras, José Ignacio 25 n. 9  
 Tenenti, Alberto 42 n. 70  
 Thomas Aquinas, saint 26, 29, 152–154  
 Thomism 20, 152  
 Toleration, tolerance 155, 169, 176, 182, 185–187, 201, 229  
 Torrentino, Lorenzo 41, 45 nn. 87–88, 47 n. 96, 66 n. 6  
 Tortorice, John IX  
 Touchard, Jean 156  
 Tour d'Auvergne, Henri de la, duke of Bouillon 191  
 Tournon, André 123 n. 33  
 Tremellius, Immanuel 193  
 Tribbechovius, Adam 223  
 Turchetti, Mario 185–186  
 Tutino, Stefania 38 n. 53  
 Tyacke, Nicholas 208 n. 82  
 Tyrannicide 76–78, 80

Universal Salvation 36, 54, 86, 119, 134, 157, 174 n. 30, 210, 223

Urbani, Orazio 140–143  
 Utopism 5, 15–16

Valdés, Juan de 13, 66–67, 223, 225  
 Van Limborch, Philippus 224  
 Vanhaelen, Maude IX  
 Varchi, Benedetto 41–42, 50 n. 108  
 Vasoli, Cesare 35 n. 39, 42 n. 70  
 Venard, Marc 13 n. 43, 68 n. 13, 181 n. 48  
 Venemans, Bernard Albert 193 n. 18  
 Venturi, Franco 82 n. 62  
 Verde, Armando F. 172 n. 23  
 Vergerio, Pier Paolo 40  
 Vermaseren, Bernard Antoon 39 n. 56  
 Vermigli, Pietro Martire 66  
 Villani, Stefano 208 n. 80  
 Vinay, Valdo 85 n. 62  
 Vinta, Belisario 141 n. 19, 143 n. 27  
 Viret, Pierre 68 n. 13, 69  
 Visconti, Alfonso 98 nn. 123–124, 113–114, 143–144  
 Viti, Paolo 25 n. 8  
 Vitoria, Francisco de 153  
 Vivanti, Corrado 17 n. 55, 18 n. 56, 156 n. 67, 157 n. 69, 166 nn. 3, 5–6, 167 n. 7, 168 n. 11, 170 n. 17, 179 n. 41  
 Vivonne, Jean de, marquis of Pisany 133 n. 86, 191  
 Von Raitenau, Wolf Dietrich 155 n. 64, 220–221  
 Vosmeer, Sasbout 218  
 Vries de Heekelingen, H. de 194 n. 20

Wadsworth, James B. 68 n. 13  
 Walch, Johann Georg 223  
 Wanegffelen, Thierry 156 n. 68, 166 n. 3, 180 n. 48, 186 n. 65  
 Watt, Mary Alexandra 43 n. 73  
 Weinstein, Donald 28 n. 18, 30 n. 20  
 Wevers, H. 196 n. 29  
 Willet, Andrew 208–209  
 William of Orange, *called the Silent* 94, 165  
 Wolfe, John 78 n. 40, 184 n. 59  
 Wolfe, Michael 136 n. 1  
 Wos, Jan W. 216 n. 109  
 Wotton, Henry 17  
 Wtenbogaert, Johann 193 n. 19  
 Württemberg, Friedrich von, duke 201

Yates, Francis A. 18 nn. 56–57, 214 nn. 102, 105

Zaccaria, Raffaella Maria 25 n. 8

Zanardi, Zita 31 n. 23

Zanchi, Girolamo 54, 70

Zemon Davis, Natalie 68 n. 13

Zorzi, Francesco 24–26, 34–36, 42 n. 72, 226

Zwicker, Daniel 183

Zwinger, Theodor 10, 50

Zwingli, Ulrich 53, 70, 122, 146 n. 34, 225